International Development Research Centre

Centre de recherches pour le développement international

P.O. Box/C.P. 8500
Ottawa, Canada
K1G 3H9

CANADA

103-00255/

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT:

AN ASSESSMENT OF IDRC'S EXPERIENCE AND PROSPECTS

A Report to the

International Development Research Centre

#000931/94-0817

by

Wm. C. Found

York University
Toronto, Canada

June 30, 1995

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report addresses five issues: (1) it provides a **comprehensive inventory of IDRC's support for participatory research (PR) throughout the Centre's history**. It seeks to identify all projects or activities involving PR which have been supported by IDRC, and provides an analysis of the types, patterns, and historical trends of that support. (2) Through a critical assessment of the projects identified, and through a detailed analysis of 15 selected projects, the report seeks to **identify both the strengths and weaknesses of PR activities**. It also demonstrates where, when, and how particular types of PR are both appropriate and effective. Similarly, it identifies conditions under which PR tends to be inappropriate. (3) Through an analysis of current literature, materials acquired from other agencies, and selected interviews, the report **traces the development of the uses of PR within development settings**. It examines a broad range of types of PR activities and methods, and attempts to consolidate these disparate approaches by **devising a standard definition of PR which could help to focus future work within IDRC** and elsewhere. (4) Based on detailed analyses of IDRC-supported activities, the report provides an **evaluation framework which might be used in the future assessment of PR projects**. The framework is designed for use when projects are being planned, when they are monitored part-way through their implementation, or when they are evaluated after their completion. (5) Finally, the report considers the **circumstances under which PR could be particularly appropriate**. The evaluation framework also provides guidance as to how the effectiveness of PR could be enhanced in different settings.

Research for the report was completed during the period December, 1994 to June, 1995. With the assistance of an IDRC Advisory Committee and two research assistants (one in Ottawa and the other in Kenya), the research proceeded through the following steps:

(1) IDRC's computer database was analyzed to identify all of the PR projects which had received IDRC support. 145 such projects, out of a total of 5,506 projects supported throughout the Centre's history, were identified. Information from other agency databases was also analyzed in order to compare IDRC's support for PR with that of other organizations.

(2) A special database, listing 23 variables for each of the 145 IDRC PR projects, was devised for detailed analysis. The projects were found to fit into eight basic categories: (i) participatory research -- projects which involved a high degree of genuine involvement and control by the beneficiaries; (ii) mobilized research -- projects in which significant community involvement was evident, but where local participation was largely "mobilized" by external researchers; (iii) community involvement -- projects where the community was involved in research, but somewhat peripherally; (iv) methodological development -- projects which concentrated on the design and testing of PR methods; (v) capacity building -- projects where local capacity was being developed to eventually accommodate PR methodology; (vi) participatory research training -- projects with the expressed purpose of training others in PR methodology; (vii) qualitative research -- projects where specific qualitative methods (e.g. ethnography) rather than PR were specified; and (viii) other -- projects with some PR content,

but which did not fit conveniently into any of the other seven categories.

(3) Seven IDRC-sponsored projects in Kenya, selected to illustrate a range of PR activities, were visited and assessed during February, 1995. Eight additional projects in a range of locations throughout the South were analyzed on the basis of information obtained in IDRC's files in Ottawa, and through interviews with principal investigators and IDRC project officers.

(4) A review of the latest literature concerning the field of PR was undertaken in order to place the issues and experiences of IDRC within a broader, world-wide context.

(5) Forty-one of the world's major agencies involved in sponsoring development activities were asked to provide information concerning their evaluation of projects involving PR. Analysis of the information provided by the 21 agencies who responded suggested that IDRC is one of the major agencies involved with PR.

(6) The Directors of five of IDRC's six regional offices (one was unavailable) were interviewed in order to assess the experiences of their Offices with PR activities, and to receive their suggestions for the issues, procedures, and outputs for this study.

(7) An assessment of IDRC's current financial and planning environment was ascertained in order to identify issues that might affect IDRC's consideration of support for PR. Efforts were made to ensure that this study would provide information that was pertinent in a time of declining financial resources.

(8) Interviews were undertaken with PR experts, both within and outside of

IDRC, in order to analyze IDRC's general experience with PR, and to place it within a world setting.

The report concludes that IDRC is a leader in both its support for development-related participatory research, and in its accumulated knowledge about the method. Its staff includes a core of professionals with wide-spread experience in PR; and the projects which it has supported include a wide variety of PR types, in a variety of problem settings. The projects demonstrate a number of successes and shortcomings, experiences which can contribute to real advancement in what is still a new field.

The methods and conditions under which PR is used have been changing since the 1970s; and a number of continuing changes will be required if PR is to become even more effective. At one time PR was used almost exclusively in small, community-based projects as a "stand-alone" methodology, but it now tends to be used along with other more traditional approaches in very complex projects, many of which are large. This study demonstrates, in fact, that PR can be useful in very large, multi-national projects, involving many agencies and individuals, and large budgets. Whereas PR approaches used to be somewhat informal, and research designs were typically open-ended, contemporary projects achieve success if participants are well trained by professionals, projects are evaluated through participatory processes, and researchers are specific about PR definitions and research frameworks. In an effort to suggest some degree of standardization, this report provides definitions and a

general framework for planning and evaluating PR, based on thirty factors which help to characterize the type and the success of PR. Those practicing PR in the past have tended to be enthusiasts, more interested in demonstrating the value of the method than in undertaking critical analysis. More recently, practitioners, including several within IDRC, have critically examined what has and what has not worked in PR, which is an essential step in the process of methodological development. IDRC could improve its cumulative understanding and development of PR through more systematic, but simple evaluations of projects, using procedures already suggested by its own Evaluation Unit.

International recognition of the value of PR is increasing, and the demand for expertise in the approach will continue to increase. The World Bank, for example, has recently released a major report outlining the advantages of PR in particular contexts, advantages which include cost-effectiveness compared to more traditional methodologies. **Given its past record and existing expertise in PR, IDRC has the opportunity to build on PR as an area of strength or comparative advantage. This could form a significant component of the Centre's strategic planning for the future, and could also help ensure that IDRC will be able to respond to an important international opportunity and need.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Heading	Page
Executive Summary	i
Methodology	4
Participatory Research and International Development	6
The Changing Corporate Environment of IDRC, and Its Impact on Planning	14
A Comparison of IDRC with Other Agencies in Support of PR	17
An Analysis of PR Projects Supported by IDRC	21
Projects Analyzed in Detail in the Ottawa Office	32
Major Themes	35
Levels of Success	48
Field Trip to Kenya	50
Projects Visited in the Field	51
Levels of Success	58
Other Interviews and Meetings	59
A Framework for Examining PR	60
Definitions	60
Components of an Evaluation Framework	61
Conclusions	67
References	73
Appendices (listed separately below)	76-118

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1:	Support for PR, by Agency, According to a Search of the IDRIS Database	19
2.	Reports Relating to PR Produced by Six Major Agencies	20
3.	Projects in Special Database (SDB), Sorted by Type	23
4.	Projects in SDB, Sorted by Starting Date (Year)	25
5:	Projects in SDB, Sorted by Major Region	26
6.	Projects in SDB, Sorted by Local Regional Office	28
7.	Projects in SDB, Sorted by Administrative Unit	28
8.	Projects in SDB, Sorted by Length of Project (Months)	29
9.	Projects in SDB, Sorted by Amounts of Funding Administered by IDRC	30
10.	SDB, Sorted by Amounts of Funding Administered by Recipients	30
11.	Evaluation Framework for PR Projects	63

Appendix

1.	Members of the Project Advisory Committee	76
2.	Agencies Asked to Provide Information Concerning Participatory Research	77
3.	Individuals Consulted During the Project	79

Appendix (continued) **Page**

4. PR Documents Provided, on Request, by International Agencies 82

5. Descriptions/Analyses of Projects Examined in the IDRC Office in Ottawa 84

Women in Community Development (Asia) 84
Occupational Health in the Metal Industry (Mexico) 86
Workers' Participation (Zimbabwe) 89
Understanding High-Risk Sexual Behaviour 91
Food Systems Under Stress 93
Sustainable Hillside Agriculture (Latin America) 95
Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Programme 98
West African Rural Foundation 102

6. Descriptions/Analyses of Projects Examined in Kenya 106

Artisanal Fisheries 106
Community-Based Evaluation of Water Quality: Using WHO's Minimum Evaluation Procedure in Kibwezi 108
Social Forestry 110
African Research Utilization Network (ARUNET) 111
Urban Poverty and Survival Strategies 113
Elangata Wuas Ecosystem Management Programme 114
Community-Based Health Information and Planning 116

PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT: AN ASSESSMENT OF IDRC'S EXPERIENCE AND PROSPECTS

by

Wm. C. Found
York University

"Empowerment through knowledge" is both the mission of IDRC, and an essential aspect of participatory research (PR). It is no accident, therefore, that PR has played a significant role in the research activities supported by IDRC during its 25-year history. In PR the beneficiaries of research are encouraged to help identify problems to be solved, to identify and implement the research methods and activities to be undertaken, to evaluate the results, and to help determine the subsequent activities or programmes which will enhance the beneficiaries' quality of life. **This kind of participation, in all aspects of the research, and in planning for and managing intervention, can both improve the quality of the enquiry, and can "empower" the beneficiaries to be fully active and knowledgeable in the quest for improved human conditions.** This approach can have important long-term benefits, as knowledge and empowerment strengthen and support the human capacity for sustainable research and intervention, and for self-evaluation, benefits which can continue long after funding agencies or external experts have disappeared from the area. **The important role of PR in helping IDRC to fulfil its mandate is, therefore, indisputable.**

As IDRC seeks to re-position itself in the face of significant cut-backs in its financial support from the Parliament of Canada, it is particularly important for the Centre to assess its ground-breaking experiences with PR. IDRC is making strategic choices on where and how to capitalize on its particular strengths and niches. Within the broad world of institutional support to the South, IDRC has a particularly long record of support for PR. In the process, some of its staff have gained invaluable experience and knowledge in the conducting of various types of PR. **This experience and knowledge, together with the many partnerships already established between the Centre and institutions in the South, provide the basis for a vital, important area of strength** -- an area which IDRC needs to wisely assess as a basis for strategic choices in the future. If IDRC is to build on its strengths, then what role should PR play in future developments? Furthermore, the needs for participatory research processes on a global scale will undoubtedly increase in the future, in relation to which IDRC could place itself in a particularly advantageous position.

To enable IDRC to build on its strength in PR will require a number of specific tasks: (1) While the Centre has produced a number of important reports concerning PR, **a comprehensive inventory of its support for PR throughout its 25 years of history will provide a more specific picture of activities, patterns, and trends.** (2) IDRC can learn from those past experiences by undertaking **a critical assessment of selected projects to identify both their strengths and weaknesses.** In particular, the assessment can demonstrate where, when, and how particular types of PR are both

appropriate and effective. Similarly, it can identify conditions under which PR tends to be inappropriate. (3) Given the newness of the field of PR (its beginnings in development settings can be traced to the 1970s), variations in the practice and terminology of PR across various contexts, users, and problem settings permeate both the published literature and project files. **An articulation of some fairly standard definitions, so that future consideration of PR initiatives could proceed from a base of common understanding** or communication among project participants, would be very helpful. This could also facilitate project tracking, shared learning, and the accumulation of knowledge about the utility of various PR methodologies. (4) **An evaluation framework which could be used to assess PR activities could provide guidance to those involved, and could enable IDRC to continue to learn from its ongoing participation in such projects.** A systematic method of learning could help IDRC to continue to gain expertise in PR, and allow it to develop this important area of strength and comparative advantage. (5) It would be useful to **consider the future circumstances under which PR would be particularly appropriate**. By systematically considering when and how PR has particular value, IDRC would be in the best position to use this area of strength in formulating future activities, and in approaching partners or other funding agencies with ideas for new initiatives.

This report addresses each of the five issues outlined above, and reports on the first effort to provide a comprehensive assessment of IDRC's experiences with PR. It should be emphasized, however, that this effort has been relatively modest. The

investigation, involving one full-time researcher in Ottawa and one part-time assistant in Kenya, has been completed in five months and has involved field observations over a brief period in only one country. Still, the general features of IDRC's experience with PR, as well as the identification of critical issues from the perspective of both past experience and future planning, are clearly outlined. They have emerged during the research as quite unmistakeable.

Methodology

The first step in undertaking this study was to establish an **Advisory Committee**, who commented on all aspects of the study at various times, from design through to analysis. The seven members of the committee (see Appendix 1), all IDRC staff located in the Head Office in Ottawa, included representatives of the Corporate Affairs, Social Science, Information Sciences and Systems, Environment and Natural Resources, and the Health Sciences Divisions.

Two **research assistants** were appointed to the Project: Sherrill Johnson, who undertook most of the data analysis, review of project files, interviews, and numerous other tasks in Ottawa; and Nyambura Susan Maina, who reviewed project files in Kenya, interviewed local IDRC staff, selected projects for detailed analysis, and arranged for the Kenyan field visit of the principal investigator. Helen Hambly, of the IDRC Office in Nairobi, provided much additional assistance in the field.

The study entailed eight major components: **(1) Search of the IDRC computer database** (IDRIS -- Inter-Agency Development Research Information System) in order **to identify and classify all projects involving PR that had been sponsored by the Centre during its 25 years of operation** (145 were identified). The initial selection of projects was based on key-word searches, and the subsequent project classification was based on an analysis of 22 of the variables listed in the database for each project. **(2) A sub-set of 15 of the 145 projects was selected for detailed analysis**. These projects were not a representative sample of all those involving PR; but they were selected, after numerous interviews with IDRC staff, to demonstrate a variety of characteristics of PR activity. They also included seven projects examined by the principal investigator in Kenya. **(3) The seven IDRC-sponsored projects in Kenya**, selected to illustrate a range of PR activities, **were visited during February, 1995**. Kenya was selected as a field site because of the proximity of the IDRC regional office in Nairobi, the fact that Kenya has a long history of projects involving PR, and because of the principal investigator's general familiarity with the area. **(4) A review of the latest literature concerning the field of PR** was undertaken in order to place the issues and experiences of IDRC within a broader, world-wide context. **(5) Forty-one of the world's major agencies involved in sponsoring development activities** (listed in Appendix 2) **were asked to provide information concerning their evaluation of projects involving PR**. The information provided by the 21 agencies who responded was analysed in order to gain some understanding of the extent to which PR is supported, analyzed, and evaluated by

those units. (6) The Directors of five of IDRC's six regional offices (South-East and East Asia, Eastern and Southern Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North Africa, and West and Central Africa) were interviewed in order to assess the experiences of their Offices with PR activities, and to receive their suggestions for the issues, procedures, and outputs for this study. (7) Statements by IDRC's President over the past several months were analyzed in order to gain some perspective on the current funding environment, and on its implications for the Centre's future planning. (8) Interviews, both with IDRC staff and with PR experts outside of IDRC, provided information about the Centre's experience, and about the general development of the field of participatory research (all persons who were consulted are listed in Appendix 3). Many of the interviews provided insights into the 15 projects selected for detailed study, insights which could not be gleaned from the written record.

Participatory Research and International Development

The formal use of PR as a significant methodology in international development activities began in the 1970s. The ideas of researchers working intimately within communities, of identifying themselves with project beneficiaries, or of communities identifying their own problems and solutions were not, of course, new to the 1970s; but PR as a formally recognized methodology by that name became known within international-development settings only at this time.

The intellectual roots of PR have been traced to many sources. Morley (1990), for example, places great importance on developments in the 1940s, including the work of social psychologists at the **Tavistock Institute of Human Relations** in London; work in the **Center for Group Dynamics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology**; and, in the Developing World, the impact of the **"Ghandian" approach, involving appropriate technology, co-operative ventures, the rediscovery of cultural roots, and efforts to place greater emphasis on "self-reliance" in community development**. Fals-Borda and Rahman (1991) associate PR with a very long tradition of liberationist movements, which involves **"the enlightenment and awakening of common peoples"** (p.vi). Chambers (1994) relates Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA -- a particular form of PR) to "activist participatory research", **"a family of approaches and methods which use dialogue and participatory research to enhance people's awareness and confidence, and to empower their action"** (p.954). Like many others, Chambers views Paulo Freire and his book, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1968), as a major influence on the development of PR within a liberationist context. Deshler and Ewert (1995) outline five fields of practice or traditions which have made contributions to PR: action research in organizations; PR in community development; action research in schools; farmer PR and technology generation; and participatory evaluation. They view "participatory action research" as an umbrella term that includes several traditions of theory and practice, including PR,

action research, praxis research, participatory inquiry, collaborative inquiry, action inquiry, and co-operative inquiry. To them "The term "participation" represents a **democratization thrust in research, especially in social science practice, that recognizes the value of including practitioners, community members, citizens, employees, and volunteers as essential to the generation of useful knowledge regarding major social, political, economic, technical, cultural, and organizational problems**. The term **"action" indicates that the research is intended to contribute directly to change** efforts on the part of participants in specific situations. The term **"research" indicates a systematic effort to generate knowledge**. ..... However, the major thrust is not primarily to create generalizable knowledge or "basic" research that is unattached to particular circumstances, but to **focus the knowledge generation on specific desired changes** in a specific, often unique, situation." (p.1).

Outside of the realm of academic publishing in the West, many groups in the South (e.g. some members of the National Environment Secretariat, Government of Kenya; and many village organizations within the Caribbean region) believe that the basic characteristics of PR emerged "naturally" within their communities, and without the aid of intellectuals from the North. So while it is interesting to speculate about the specific origins of modern PR, **it is clear that the method has no simple, linear history**. It is also clear that by the 1970s a combination of (1) indigenous political action in many newly independent countries, (2) theoretical and empirical advances in education and behavioural psychology, (3) the development of ecology and systems

analysis, (4) increased concern for public participation and democratic action, (5) environmental and social impact analysis, (6) critiques of positivism and traditional scientific method, (7) increased awareness of the plight of people who are traditionally unheard and marginalized (e.g. women), (8) the "re-discovery" of traditional forms of community action in the Developing World, as well as (9) a general recognition that development planning of the post-world war 2 period had not led to expected benefits for many of the world's poorest countries -- all came to be associated with the rising importance of PR as a method for examining problems related to international development.

IDRC was one of the international funding agencies to support PR at an early stage, and it has continued to play an important role in the use and development of the approach. A number of IDRC reports have addressed important issues concerning the use of PR, including the following: N. Stromquist, "Action Research: a New Sociological Approach in Developing Countries", IDRC Reports, (1984); A. Bernard, Participatory Research in IDRC: State-of-the-Art and Practice, (1987); Working Group Paper, Participatory Research in IDRC, (1988); and D. Grisdale et al., Participatory Research and the Health Sciences Division, (1989). The last three papers, in particular, provide a very clear and important enunciation of the many issues surrounding the strengths, weaknesses, and contexts for IDRC's support for PR; and they are essential reading for any concerned about the general place of PR within IDRC's range of activities.

While many versions of PR have emerged during the past 25 years, they all have some general characteristics in common: (1) the "distance" between researcher and researched is minimized. In an ideal case, those with development problems (e.g. members of an impoverished community) will identify their own problems, determine an appropriate research programme, undertake the research, analyze the results, identify actions that can ameliorate their problems, implement those actions, evaluate the results, and reformulate the research/plans/action in an iterative fashion. Some have referred to this "pure" form of PR as "authentic participation" (Prasada, 1995), which is really akin to complete self-responsibility. Two features of this approach are particularly remarkable. Firstly, the underlying methodology is in direct contrast with traditional science, in which the "researcher" distances herself/himself from the "researched" in order to maintain "objectivity" and experimental control. Secondly, the conditions for completely self-formulated and self-administered community research and action are seldom met, and "outside" participants (e.g. development consultants, university staff, NGOs) are required in order to provide special expertise or leadership. Under these conditions, the research process and the results are jointly "shared" by both the local participants and the outsiders (Working Group Paper, 1988). **(2) PR involves continuous learning, sometimes called "action learning", on the part of all participants.** Research problems are rarely discreet, nor the research activities carefully controlled, as in laboratory conditions. Rather, the identification of problems is often continuous; and the sequence of identifying problems and solutions is rarely predictable or highly

organized. Instead, the community or group constantly "learns" through iterative experimentation, which is often based as much on "trial-and-error" methods as on the careful planning which is more characteristic of traditional research. To take proper advantage of PR, the group is conscious of the learning which accumulates; and uses the lessons of experience to help formulate future actions. **(3) Action is another of the essential characteristics of all PR.** The fundamental purpose of PR is to improve local conditions. While personal or community "empowerment" may be a most important aspect of PR (and many argue that the empowerment which accompanies PR is itself a sufficient reason for utilizing the method, particularly because it helps lead to "sustainable" development), it is the "applied" action resulting from PR which brings immediate rewards to the people involved, and which forms an essential aspect of the method's legitimacy.

Following the initial interest in PR within development settings in the 1970s, **the approach gained momentum during the 1980s and into the 1990s**. PR has never been the predominant methodology in a vast majority of development projects; and it has been the subject of considerable scepticism in both the South and the North. As its use has matured, however, **four trends are noteworthy**.

(1) Attention has been focussed on the conditions under which PR is particularly appropriate or inappropriate. Rather than either praising or condemning the method in a general way, researchers and institutions have become more careful

about considering the contexts within which PR is appropriate, and about analyzing the conditions under which it might be used (see, e.g. Bernard, 1987 and Working Group Paper, 1988).

(2) **Some institutions which have been traditionally slow to adopt the use of PR (which is most of them), have begun to recognize some of its value in development settings**. The World Bank (1994), for example, has undertaken an extensive study which documents the advantages of using PR in a number of the projects which it has funded. Among the cited advantages is the fact that projects which have used participatory methods for problem identification, programme implementation, or project evaluation are sometimes more "cost efficient" than more traditional projects. When those who know the problem setting best are intimately involved with the research and the remedial intervention, the need for costly start-up orientation by expensive outsiders can be avoided. Further the information provided by local beneficiaries can often be more reliable than that gleaned by external agents. The Canadian International Development Agency is another institution which has produced a recent study (1994) documenting some of the advantages of PR. This study makes a useful distinction among PR at the "macro", "meso", and "micro" levels of development, and provides useful ideas of how to implement PR in a variety of settings.

(3) While the general approach of PR is liberal and democratic, **the specific methods used in PR have become increasingly sophisticated and disciplined**.

Effective PR involves much more than simply putting local beneficiaries and outside experts together in an unstructured setting. A large array of techniques has been developed to effect the very challenging task of enabling untrained community members to play a useful role in research. These techniques, including special forms of community meetings; focus-group sessions; search conferences; record keeping; participatory mapping and modelling; seasonality diagramming; matrix ranking; Chapatti diagrams; transect walks; timelines; wealth ranking; numerous methods of estimating, quantifying, and comparing; creative art; card games; and theatre, have become increasingly rigorous, and more closely adapted to individual field locations (see Mosse, 1994). The practice of PR has also become increasingly professional, with recent calls for greater standardization in training and codes of conduct (see, e.g., "Sharing Our Concerns and Looking to the Future", the lead paper in Notes on Participatory Learning and Action, February, 1995).

(4) As there appears to be some growing consensus among development agencies about the value of PR, the theoretical and academic literature about PR appears to be becoming more diverse. **As more is learned about the use of PR within different contexts,** and as the historical origins of the approach are further traced, **the theoretical terminologies and intellectual analyses are becoming increasingly complex.** The consensus concerning the utility of PR which is emerging among development institutions is not matched by any apparent consensus among theoreticians. This places a special burden on agencies to define clearly their

meanings of PR methods; and to create at least a common vocabulary for discussing PR and its various applications. **It is, perhaps, appropriate that the institutions concerned with applied research and development, rather than academicians, should provide the leadership in determining general guidelines and terminology for use with PR. IDRC is well positioned to help provide this leadership, given the Centre's long-term interest and experience with PR.**

The Changing Corporate Environment of IDRC, and Its Impact on Planning

It is important, in assessing IDRC's past experience with PR and in looking to the future, to understand the corporate context within which PR is to receive support. As indicated at the beginning of this paper, **PR, which is an established method of "empowering" local people to conduct development-related research and intervention, is a natural "fit" with IDRC's traditional goals**. As indicated in a recent analysis, "The IDRC was founded on the proposition that the application of knowledge to the poverty of the developing world was best generated by Southern academics themselves. Such an idea presupposed a partnership based on generosity, self-help and mutual respect, all deeply held Canadian values" (Stockdale, 1995, p. 322). PR, which epitomizes joint-ownership of research, mutual learning, and action, ought to be one of the preferred research methodologies of a progressive agency such as IDRC. Indeed, the examined record does reflect this trend.

IDRC has experienced important changes throughout its history, several of which could be expected to impact on its support for PR. Constant throughout the institution's history has been an emphasis on innovation, on research related to development, and on the identification and encouragement of local expertise and technology in the South. These continuing emphases on local empowerment and applied research are a major factor in explaining the constant support for PR activities. While originally organized along fairly sharp divisional lines, IDRC's institutional development since the latter part of the 1980s has emphasized interdisciplinary research based in general problem settings, an emphasis which would be expected to increase the importance of PR. The appearance of major IDRC reports addressing the potential for PR in 1987, 1988, and 1989 would also be expected to increase the attractiveness of the method, as well as reflecting increasing interest within the Centre. General funding levels within IDRC were either constant or increasing up to 1990, which helped to provide an encouraging environment for investment in experimental methodologies such as PR. Such a supportive environment is particularly important for PR, where the results of research are difficult to predict in advance, and where long periods of time are sometimes required before positive results can be seen.

One could argue that other recent trends might be both encouraging and discouraging for PR. Reductions in general levels of funding since 1990, and an increased emphasis on "results-oriented" research with a high degree of predictability,

might be seen as detrimental to the fate of PR. At the same time, the increased **emphasis on Region-level decision-making**, with close ties to the "roots" of development need and expertise, might be seen to increase the demand for PR activities. Similarly, the **designation of IDRC as "an Agenda 21 organisation"** (Stockdale, 1995, p. 288), with increased responsibility for research and development which is sustainable and related to local environmental matters, ought to have heightened the importance of PR.

Recently, IDRC has experienced particularly severe financial cutbacks by the Parliament of Canada, and has **embarked on a vigorous exercise of strategic planning in order to secure a future in the face of diminished resources**. The Board of Governors has set a target of 50 percent for the proportion of total funding which should come from non-Parliamentary sources by the end of the next three years (Staff Meeting, April 4, 1995). At the same time, the proportion of the budget earmarked for administration is to be reduced to 20 percent. The institution is to establish clear areas of priority or focus, is to concentrate on large projects, and is to seek partnerships with other institutions in order to secure finances from beyond its own base budget. The underlying strategy appears to be to **concentrate future developments in areas of particular strength or advantage**, to identify niches which will enable a changed IDRC to exploit its areas of strength, to diversify its sources of funding through strategic partnerships, to concentrate on research areas where solutions to world problems can be found, and to remain a "large" organization with

significant presence and influence on the world stage. It is against this background that one must consider the future of PR. Some see significant possibilities for an increased emphasis on PR within this context. Others, who view PR as particularly appropriate for small-scale, highly localized projects, with long timelines and considerable latitude to produce unexpected or unprescribed results, are more pessimistic about the future of PR within a changed IDRC.

A Comparison of IDRC with Other Agencies in Support of PR

World-wide, IDRC has a reputation for supporting indigenous research in the South, while avoiding the constraints of "tied aid". It is also known for its support for PR, and appears to stand out as one of the world's leading agencies in this area. It is somewhat difficult to prove assertions such as these, but empirical evidence collected for this study certainly offers important confirmation.

The machine-readable data bank of the Inter-Agency Development Research Information System (IDRIS) was searched in order to identify all funded projects which appeared to involve PR. The key-words "participatory research, action research, participatory action research, participatory rural appraisal", and "participat" (a truncated term which gives all terms starting with that root) were used to search the files of the six agencies available on the system: the International Development Research Centre (IDRC); the Board on Science and Technology for

International Development (BOSTID), Washington, D.C.; the Finnish International Development Agency (FINNIDA); the International Foundation for Science (IFS), Stockholm; the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); and the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SAREC). The frequencies resulting from the search are indicated in Table 1. Note that **IDRC is the leading supporter of PR by far.**

Other databases were searched to identify reports and other research materials involving PR which have been produced by six other major agencies: the Agency for International Development (AID), Washington; The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva; the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris; the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Vienna; and the World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva. The key-words "participatory research, action research, participatory action research", and "participatory rural appraisal" were used to identify particular items. The results are indicated in Table 2. It is apparent that items relating to PR are quite rare for each of these agencies, particularly in comparison to the total number of items produced. Although no direct comparison with IDRC is available, even the projects in IDRC identified by key-word (Table 1) outnumber the total number of PR-related documents produced by each of these six major agencies. **The results confirm, again, that IDRC's experience with PR is substantial by international comparisons.**

Table 1: Support for PR, by Agency, According to a Search of the IDRIS Database

	IDRC	BOSTID	FINNIDA	IFS	JICA	SAREC
Total Number of Projects	5506	211	128	1921	412	895
Key Word	Number of Projects Referenced by "Key Word"					
PR (97)	97	0	0	0	0	0
AR (96)	80	2	0	5	0	9
PAR (11)	11	0	0	0	0	0
PRA (2)	2	0	0	0	0	0
Participat (719)	649	3	7	7	0	53
Participat as % of total no. of projects	12%	1%	5%	0.4%	0	6%

Acronyms:

IDRC	International Development Research Centre (Canada)
BOSTID	Board on Science and Technology for International Development (USA)
FINNIDA	Finnish International Development Agency
IFS	International Foundation for Science (Sweden)
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
SAREC	Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries
PR	Participatory Research
AR	Action Research
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal

Table 2: Reports Relating to PR Produced by Six Major Agencies

	Key Word	PR	AR	PAR	PRA
Agency	Total No. of Reports				
AID	35,428	12	36	3	18
FAO	59,684	13	75	9	1
ILO	40,233	42	33	3	0
UNESCO	57,866	5	34	1	0
UNIDO	19,130	na	65	na	na
WHO	11,008	1	9	0	0

Acronyms:

AID	Agency for International Development (USA)
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization (UN)
ILO	International Labour Organization (UN)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
WHO	World Health Organization (UN)

PR	Participatory Research
AR	Action Research
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal

Forty-one leading development and research agencies were requested, by letter, to provide any information which they had produced concerning the evaluation of their own forms of PR or participatory development (Appendix 2). Twenty-one provided extensive and helpful replies, but only four (the International

Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT, Columbia), the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR, The Hague), the Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries (SAREC), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), plus four agencies of the United Nations (FAO, ILO, UNDP, and UNICEF) were able to provide relevant materials. Some others (e.g. the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), London) provided lists of reports that might be of interest. **Most agencies were unable to respond with any of their own documentation, but several expressed an interest in the issue**, and asked to receive a report of this study.

The fifteen documents related to PR which were provided (listed in Appendix 4) cover a broad range of topics, and **tend to concentrate on forms of PR in rural development**, particularly Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). This reflects a trend notable in the published literature – that much development-related PR has concentrated on agricultural communities.

All of the research with international agencies suggests that IDRC has been at the forefront in supporting PR.

An Analysis of PR Projects Supported by IDRC

To undertake an aggregate analysis of PR projects supported by IDRC, a

special database (SDB), composed of data extracted from IDRC's machine-readable files for all projects was created. Out of the 5,506 IDRC-supported projects, 145 were considered to have a significant PR component, and were included in the SDB. The 145 projects were selected on the basis of an initial search of the complete set of project files by key-word, a detailed examination of the project descriptions within the files, and the personal recommendations of IDRC project officers in Ottawa. The SDB included data for 23 variables for each of the 145 projects, as follows: Project Number, Project Officer, Alternate Project Officer, Title, Division, Sub-Division, Recipient Institution, Research Institution, Project Leader, Funding ($) from IDRC, Project Duration (months), Recipient Contribution, Other Contributions, Location of Administration (either Centre or Regional Office), Regional Office, Area, Country(ies), Type of Institution (Public or Private), Type of Institution (National, Regional, or International), Centre-Administered Portion of Funding, Recipient-Administered Portion of Funding, Funding Category (External, Centre-Partnership, Centre-Administered), Project Classification. The last category, Project Classification, was determined after examining the entire data set, and was based on a typology designed by the research team.

Table 3 indicates the distribution of PR projects by project type. Projects are divided into eight types, as follows: (1) Participatory Research -- projects which involve a high degree of genuine involvement and control by the beneficiaries, (2) Mobilized Research -- projects in which significant community involvement is evident,

but where local participation is largely "mobilized" by external researchers; (3) Community Involvement – projects where community involvement is less pronounced than in category 2. The community is involved in research, but somewhat peripherally. It has no control over the research agenda; (4) Methodological Development – projects which concentrate on the design and testing of PR methods; (5) Capacity Building – projects where local capacity is being developed to eventually accommodate PR methodology; (6) Participatory Research Training – projects with the expressed purpose of training others in PR methodology; (7) Qualitative Research – projects where specific qualitative methods (e.g. ethnography) rather than PR are specified; and (8) Other – mainly projects that have some PR content, but which do not fit conveniently into any of the preceding seven categories.

Table 3: Projects in Special Database (SDB), Sorted by Type

Type of Project	Number of Projects
Participatory Research	33
"Mobilized" Participatory Research	27
Community Involvement	26
Methodological Development	16
Capacity Building	11
PR Training	11
Qualitative Research	6
Other	15

The largest number of projects (33) fits into the PR category, but it has been possible to identify similar numbers of Mobilized-Research (27) and Community- Involvement (26) projects. A significant aspect of this analysis is that it is possible to divide IDRC's PR projects into identifiable types on the basis of data included in IDRC's machine-readable files, even among these three closely-related categories. This involves a close reading of the project summaries, which usually offer evidence of the degree of local participation within projects. Similarly, **the Methodological, Capacity-Building, and PR Training projects are relatively easy to differentiate**. Classification of projects into types has implications not only for examining activities after the fact, but for the possible identification of PR types during the project-planning phase. This matter will be addressed in a subsequent section of the report.

Table 4 indicates the starting date (year) for each project in the SDB. The first project began in 1978 (a project concerning cropping systems in the Philippines). **The number of projects remained steady but fairly low (eight or less) until 1988, when the numbers suddenly increased to 14-19 per year** (data for 1994 are not complete because the files are not yet completed). 1988 was also the year when the IDRC Working Group Paper on PR appeared, and one can speculate that the paper either caused or marked a new plateau of interest in the method. It is also possible that by 1988 more project officers than previously were using participatory terminology to describe projects with significant community involvement.

Table 4: Number and Value of Projects in SDB, Sorted by Starting Date (Year)

Year of Project Start	Number of Projects	Total $ Value of Projects
> 1980	1	619,000
1980	2	317,300
1981	3	279,000
1982	4	958,200
1983	6	534,220
1984	6	904,000
1985	3	500,100
1986	6	673,413
1987	8	1,442,706
1988	16	4,928,274
1989	14	1,619,606
1990	15	2,238,308
1991	17	3,261,865
1992	17	3,849,822
1993	19	5,283,587
1994	8	2,524,625
Total	145	30,926,158

Table 4 also indicates the total annual value of IDRC support for the projects in the SDB. The annual values are roughly proportional to the numbers of projects. The average value per project is $213,284, but this figure is of limited meaning because of

the great variance in the value of funding among projects (see below). **The total value of all projects in the SDB is $30,926,158.**

The regional distribution of projects is listed in Table 5. The **projects are distributed fairly evenly among IDRC's regional divisions of the developing world, except for the Middle East and North Africa, where the number of projects remains relatively small**. Within Asia a large concentration of projects occurs in the Philippines, with secondary areas of concentration in India and Thailand. The distribution of projects within West, Central, East, and Southern Africa is spread quite evenly among several countries. Within Latin America, project distribution is fairly widespread, with some concentrations in Colombia, Mexico, and Nicaragua.

Table 5: Projects in SDB, Sorted by Major Region

Region	No. of Projects
Central America	11
South America	37
South Asia	7
Southeast and East Asia	34
Middle East	5
East and Southern Africa	24
West and Central Africa	23
Other	4

The SDB indicates the scope of most institutions receiving IDRC funding, describing them as "international", "national", or "regional". The numbers of projects associated with institutions in these categories are 26, 78, and 17, respectively. No designation is provided for the remaining 24 projects.

The distribution of projects by local Regional Office (Table 6) reflects the geographical distribution of projects indicated in Table 5. The number of projects in the Latin American and Caribbean Region is very large (48), and similar numbers are obtained if the numbers for South-East, East, and South Asia are combined (43), and if all parts of Africa and the Middle East are similarly combined (46). Examined in this manner, **the world-wide distribution of PR projects is fairly even on a continental basis**.

Another dimension of regional differentiation is viewed if one examines the distribution of projects according to their administrative unit (Table 7). Within the IDRC system, some projects are administered from the Ottawa Head Office, and others are administered from the regional offices. 59 of the PR projects are administered from Ottawa. Among the regional offices, the Regional Office for South-East and East Asia (ASRO) has by far the largest number of projects (28). This is followed by the Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (LARO) (15), the Office for Eastern and Southern Africa (EARO) (12), and the Office for West and Central Africa (WARO) (11).

Table 6: Projects in SDB, Sorted by Local Regional Office

Regional Office	Number of Projects
Southeast and East Asia (ASRO)	34
South Asia (SARO - now closed)	9
West and Central Africa (WARO)	23
Eastern and Southern Africa (EARO)	21
South Africa (ROSA)	2
Middle East and North Africa (MERO)	5
Latin America and the Caribbean (LARO)	48
Other	3

Table 7: Projects in SDB, Sorted by Administrative Unit

Administrative Unit (Regional Office)	Number of Projects
Southeast and East Asia (ASRO)	28
South Asia (SARO - now closed)	1
West and Central Africa (WARO)	11
Eastern and Southern Africa (EARO)	12
South Africa (ROSA)	1
Middle East and North Africa (MERO)	0
Latin America and the Caribbean (LARO)	15
Head Office (Ottawa)	59
Other	18

Table 8 lists the SDB projects, sorted by length of project. **Few projects last more than 36 months (6), and the rest are approximately equally distributed over periods of time ranging from under one year to up to three years.** The image of PR projects as exceptionally long-lasting, an image held by some who may be impatient with the uncertainty attributed to PR, is not reflected by these data.

Table 8: Projects in SDB, Sorted by Length of Project (Months)

Project Duration	Number of Projects
12 months or less	28
13-18 months	20
19-24 months	41
25-30 months	9
31-36 months	41
More than 36 months	6

Tables 9 and 10 indicate the amounts of funding for projects, administered by IDRC and the funding recipients, respectively. The amounts of funding vary greatly by project, from under $10,000 to over $1,500,000. Under normal circumstances, large amounts of funding are handed over to recipients for administration.

Table 9: Projects in SDB, Sorted by Amounts of Funding Administered by IDRC

Amount of Funding	Number of Projects
None	51
10,000 or less	26
10,001 - 50,000	40
50,001 - 100,000	10
100,001 - 500,000	9
500,001 or more	1
Unknown	8

Table 10: SDB, Sorted by Amounts of Funding Administered by Recipients

Amount of Funding	Number of Projects
None	4
10,000 or less	2
10,001 - 50,000	18
50,001 - 100,000	34
100,001 - 500,000	69
500,001 or more	11
Unknown	7

The SDB was analyzed in order to identify the names of the IDRC project officers responsible for the 145 PR projects. **Approximately two-thirds of all of the projects were administered by only 22 different officers**, many of whom have been responsible for as many as four projects. **This group of 22, most of whom are still IDRC project officers, forms a core of individuals with considerable experience with PR -- a group which is a sizeable asset for an agency which might wish to build on its strength in PR as part of future planning.**

The Special Database can be manipulated to reveal patterns involving many combinations of variables (e.g. changes in any of the variables through time). The most significant observation is that **PR in IDRC has changed over time**. Early PR projects tended to be relatively straightforward, and involved a target sector and a target problem (e.g. use of a new agricultural technology within a community). **More recent projects tend to be much larger in scope (e.g. biodiversity and ecotourism), are more interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral, and involve collaboration between divisions and with other funding agencies**, Greater emphasis on sustainability, local participation, and indigenous knowledge is noteworthy. Whereas early PR projects were concentrated in the Social Science Division, the numbers there have declined recently; and more projects have tended to be located in the Environment and Natural Resources Division. Projects in the Health Sciences Division, on the other hand, have remained fairly constant through time. **Whereas PR used to be rather easy to identify as a "stand-alone" approach, it has come to be used in combination with**

other methods in much more complex research. PR has assumed a greater role as just one aspect of more sophisticated research and problem-solving.

Projects Analyzed in Detail in the Ottawa Office

Eight projects were examined in detail on the basis of information obtained primarily from files in the IDRC Ottawa Office, and from interviews conducted in Ottawa or by telephone. The projects, analyzed in order to demonstrate a variety of features, successes, and shortcomings in IDRC-sponsored PR, were selected on the basis of recommendations from IDRC staff, the availability of information in the Ottawa files, and the availability of project officers and project directors for interviews. The projects were also selected to represent a range of problem and geographical settings.

The analysis provided here does not constitute a thorough evaluation. To begin with, the IDRC files, although sometimes voluminous, contain relatively little evaluative information. Typically, the file for a project contains a project proposal, an IDRC project summary, an evaluation of the proposal by IDRC staff, and a series of notes or other documents concerning the administration of the funds. Sometimes correspondence relating to personnel is included, but most of the miscellaneous documentation concerns a variety of administrative matters. Technical reports are sometimes missing, and sometimes the interim reports, if available, are difficult to identify since they vary considerably in format and content. While IDRC's suggested

procedures call for the preparation of periodic evaluative summaries (Evaluation Unit, 1992), such information is seldom available. Trip reports prepared by visiting project officers sometimes contain useful information concerning the substance or progress of projects, but this is the exception rather than the rule. Project completion reports are usually not completed (IDRC is well aware of this problem, and has begun a systematic effort to prepare the missing documents). The most valuable information with which to evaluate or understand the projects selected for review came from interviews with project officers and project directors, who were generally most co-operative. In a few cases, publications or other reports emanating from the project activity provided valuable insights.

The eight projects selected for analysis were as follows: Women in Community Development (Asia) (3-P-87-0033), Mexican Metal Workers (3-P-87-0155), Zimbabwe Workers (3-P-90-0080), High-Risk Sexual Behaviour (Uganda) (90-0204), Food Systems Under Stress (FSUS) (92-8465), Sustainable Hillside Agriculture (Latin America) (93-0008), Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Programme (93-1012), and West African Rural Foundation (WARF) (93-8158). These projects are described in detail in Appendix 5. Half of the projects concern health problems, including HIV infection, community health care, and worker safety in industrial sites. The other projects concern various aspects of rural development, including biodiversity in crops, sustainable agriculture on hillsides, understanding the origins of food insecurity, and providing assistance for locally-defined development

projects. The projects vary greatly in size and scope, ranging from the small High-Risk Sexual Behaviour project, through to the very large WARF and Biodiversity projects. The projects cover a very great range of local contexts and types of participation, and provide a number of examples and lessons concerning the use of PR.

To what extent can these eight projects be classified according to the typology of project types used to categorize IDRC PR projects in the special database (see page pp. 21-22)? The Zimbabwe Workers, Sustainable Agriculture, and WARF projects could all be described as "capacity building" (type 5), and they also involve some degree of "participatory research training" (type 6). The Mexican Metal Industry project involves PR training, but also a high degree of direct participation in research by the plant workers. Further, the workers' union was intimately involved in identifying the research problem (safety/health problems at the work site), so this project is a good example of both type 1 (PR) and type 6. The Sustainable Agriculture project has a high degree of PR, both at the level of village committees and of individual farmers, so it can be classified as type 1 as well as types 5 and 6. The Biodiversity project involves both PR and methodological development, so that it can be classed as both types 1 and 4. Perhaps the easiest projects to classify by the SDB typology are the High-Risk Sexual Behaviour (type 7 – qualitative research, because PR was unsuccessful), Women in Community Development (type 3 – a low level of community involvement because of unsuccessful efforts to achieve higher levels of PR), and FSUS (types 5 and 1 – because the over-riding objective is to develop local research

capacity through concentrated participatory research on the problem of food insecurity).

The attempt to fit the eight projects into the simple seven-type classification scheme is of some value because it helps to distinguish the basic foci of the projects, but its utility is also quite limited because of the highly unique character of each project. Clearly, the major use of the SDB classification is to categorize IDRC projects on the basis of information already available in the IDRIS database. It is of increased value if projects can be allocated to more than one type. As more information is obtained for a given project, however, the simple seven-type classification system becomes limiting, and more sophisticated systems, involving more variables and different forms of data, become more useful. This issue will be addressed in detail towards the end of the report.

One can examine the eight projects in many ways (e.g. by project, by level of success, by theme, etc.). Following is an analysis by theme and by level of success. Appendix 5 provides information organized on a project-by-project basis.

Major Themes

The precise meaning of PR is not clearly enunciated in available sources for any of the projects, but its meaning is implied to varying degrees. The Women in Community Development project encompasses a very comprehensive view of PR,

where village women are expected to identify health problems, to participate in finding solutions, to implement those solutions, and to learn enough from the experience to develop self-reliant, sustainable systems of health care. This form of empowerment, involving localized research, learning, and action, embodies the form of total PR espoused by many writers in the field. The project documents do not make clear, however, precisely how this ideal is to be put into practice – a shortcoming of most projects. While it can be argued that one must not be overly prescriptive in designing a PR project since this might hinder the natural process of joint discovery and experimentation among participants, careful thought about the nature of participation – by whom, and how – could have helped an ambitious project such as this to be more realistic. The implied meaning of PR in the High-Risk Sexual Behaviour project is also comprehensive, with the ideal that local individuals, such as commercial sex workers, would help identify the health problems centring on HIV infection, would help design research to examine the spread of the infection, and would help develop patterns of behaviour that could assist in alleviating the problem. The failure of the PR component of the project meant that the information obtained by the professional researchers using qualitative methods was much like one might have been expected from a traditional epidemiological project without PR. PR in the Mexican Metal Workers and Zimbabwe Workers projects had somewhat different meanings at different levels. At the level of the plant floor, individual workers were conducting research by making personal observations about health and working conditions. This information was to be used and corroborated by medical professionals, who were collaborating with the workers. At

another level, the union(s) was providing organization and legitimacy for the workers' activities; and was also taking political action to try to improve working conditions. PR, therefore, meant different things to the different parties involved in the projects. While the underlying themes of research, learning, action and empowerment could be used to conceptualize the projects, the meaning of these terms was very specific (although not described) to different stakeholders.

Reference is made to a specific form of PR (Participatory Rural Appraisal) within the Hillside Agriculture project, although it is only one part of this quite complex undertaking. The term PRA has sufficient use in development-related projects, however, that it provides a good general indication of at least one component of the project. Similarly, the use of PRA and national workshops in the FSUS project gives some indication of the forms of PR anticipated by the project organizers.

After examining each of the projects to determine the implied meanings of PR, one is struck by the variation in meaning, even within individual projects; by the gap between the ideals described in the project proposals and the actual levels of project achievement; and by the general lack of specificity about the process of PR. At the same time, it is possible to identify the general themes of local participation in research, learning, action, and empowerment, and of collaboration between groups or individuals within projects. This collaboration implies the participation of stakeholders with different backgrounds, training, and levels of

expertise. Also evident is a **very broad spectrum or continuum in PR**, with very modest participation at one end of the scale (e.g. an individual providing information, while enjoying the benefit of some consciousness-raising through contact with a researcher or group), ranging through to full participation at the other end (e.g. when a group becomes truly empowered to conduct its own research and development without the aid of outsiders).

The extent to which each project fits within local cultural circumstances varies considerably. A major shortcoming of the Women in Community Development project was that the professionally-trained researchers were so unfamiliar with the local cultural contexts of the Asian communities with whom they were working. Consequently, they became impatient and ineffectual. Without their leadership and understanding, real collaboration and PR became impossible. The matter was further complicated because of the large number of different cultural contexts in six different countries, which created an obstacle both to the researchers who needed to understand many different contexts, and to the chances of developing practices that might be replicated among different communities. The cultural diversity within the project was too great to overcome, given the lack of preparedness of the research team. The development of PR varied among three field sites within the Hillside Agriculture project, with the greatest success occurring in the area which already had a well-developed sense of community (a village in the Cauca Valley, Columbia), good communication among residents, and mutual trust. In contrast, PR in the frontier site

because the community was so new that local cultural links (e.g. marriages between families) and mutual trust had not been established. A level of PR success in the Mexico and Zimbabwe Workers projects can be attributed to the way in which an aspect of the local culture, the union organizations, became intimately involved with projects. The unions provided a common, well-established structure within which the workers could work and look for guidance, and which also championed the cause of the projects. PR in the FSUS and Biodiversity projects is enhanced because a number of the participants, at least at the international and national levels, share a common culture through university training and professional development. This background provides a common culture which has proven to be very strong in permitting groups of committed individuals to collaborate in order to address common research problems. Advanced training or education can also be associated with the added cultural advantage of good facility in a common language (e.g. English or French), which is usually indispensable in facilitating effective communication.

Training of participants is another theme which emerges from an analysis of the eight projects as very important in the conducting of PR, and also in accounting for the levels of project success. The WARF, Hillside Agriculture, and Zimbabwe Workers projects all involve significant components related to the training of project participants to engage in effective PR. In the WARF project, for example, training is important at three different levels: in the main project office, where office staff have undertaken significant formal training; at the village level, where local NGOs are taught skills

ranging from PRA to accounting; and at the level of individual villagers, where skills such as PRA are learned as part of rural development. The FSUS project also involves a formal training component (e.g. preparation of leaders for the national workshops), but also involves informal training through the involvement of social scientists who are collectively determining the factors related to food insecurity. Lack of PR training is a significant impediment to success, as in the case of the Women in Community Development project.

As in any type of project, **leadership** is a very important factor in accounting for the nature and success of PR. Leadership can reside in individuals (e.g. the project leader in the FSUS project appears to have played a decisive role in developing the project), in institutions (e.g. CIAT plays an important leadership or facilitating role in the Hillsides Agriculture project), or in communities (e.g. the plant floor, if that can be considered a community in the Mexico Workers project). The lack of effective leadership (e.g. the Zimbabwe Workers project) can, of course, affect a project very adversely. The qualities of personal leadership for PR projects are often considered to be somewhat different than for other projects, in that the leaders must be able to work and communicate particularly effectively with others, to empathize with their points of view, to be patient, understanding, humble, and prepared to put project success ahead of any personal ambition. Such persons are sometimes referred to as facilitators or co-ordinators rather than leaders. Since the eight projects involve so many leaders at so many levels, it has not been possible to analyze the nature or effectiveness of many.

On the other hand, some lack of success has been attributed to leadership failings which do not relate to PR in particular (e.g. failure to write clear reports, to maintain a good sense of organization, or to have realistic goals).

The **political context** is an important factor in some PR projects. In the case of the Mexico Workers project, for example, the political action of the union was important in bringing about the project in the first place, and in drawing the attention of plant management and the public to the problem of unsafe working conditions. The topic had such political sensitivity, however, that the management reacted by setting in place a process which led to the ultimate dismissal of many of the workers who were participating in the project. The action also led to some political embarrassment for Canada, when public demonstrations were organized outside of the Canadian embassy in Mexico to protest IDRC's support for the project. In the Zimbabwe Workers project, the government appeared to be more tolerant of research into working conditions, particularly given the well-established history of government respect for the rights of unions to exercise independent actions. At the same time, the project was so large (potentially involving up to a million unionized workers) and the fascination of political intrigue so compelling, that political rhetoric seemed to get in the way of effective PR. An important part of the context for the Hillsides Agriculture project is the tradition, common in some parts of Latin America, of local empowerment at the community level. This background of grassroots political struggle helps to create a supportive context for the localized PR into sustainable agriculture. In one form or another political factors are

important in determining the character and level of success in a number of the projects. As seen in the Mexico case, they can also present a significant risk to successful project completion.

The eight projects vary considerably in their **internal organization**. The organization for the High-Risk Sexual Behaviour project was relatively simple since the numbers of professional researchers and potential local participants were small (about 60). The WARF, FSUS, and Biodiversity projects are very large and complex, however; and organizational schemes based on hierarchies have been put in place in order to facilitate management. Institutions at the international, national, and local levels have been established for each project; and communication, collaboration, learning, and action are all expected to occur both laterally (i.e. between institutions at the same level) and vertically (i.e. between institutions at different levels on the hierarchy). A similar multi-level organizational scheme has been put in place for the Hillsides Agriculture project. Since all of these projects are in fairly early stages of development, it is premature to judge how effectively these bureaucratic structures will function in projects which are ostensibly participatory in nature. No evidence of major difficulty has been encountered, but it will be interesting to see if the twin ideals of administrative efficiency and unfettered participation can co-exist comfortably.

The **type and extent of methodological research** varies considerably among the projects. The Mexico project involved a clearly defined experiment to measure the

extent to which workers' personal observations and interpretations of personal health could be corroborated by standard medical tests (e.g. blood tests, X-rays). The high degree of corroboration was an important methodological development, as it proved the effectiveness of the workers' qualitative, participatory research. At the other end of the scale are the Women in Community Development, Biodiversity, and Hillside Agriculture projects, where PR methodological developments are anticipated, but not clearly defined ahead of time. Instead, the projects were/are expected to create a climate and structure within which local indigenous knowledge and innovation would flourish, and new methods of conducting PR and making discoveries would emerge. The FSUS and WARF projects also anticipate this sort of innovation, although those expectations are not very explicit in project documents. The type of methodological content of the projects varies, and so does the degree to which specific methodological developments are prescribed.

Related to the last point is the **degree to which project outcomes can be or are predicted ahead of time**. The FSUS, Biodiversity, and WARF projects have clearly-stated general goals, but none is specific about particular project outputs. They all create a general structure within which specific PR is to be fostered. At the specific level, therefore, it is very difficult to predict project outcomes. The Mexico and Zimbabwe Workers and High-Risk Sexual Behaviour projects, on the other hand, involved much more precise descriptions of expected outcomes, and, one would think, higher levels of predictability. It is paradoxical, therefore, that none of the three projects

ended as planned. In the Mexican case, the PR was shown to be highly effective, but the workers lost their jobs. The Zimbabwe project, building on the experiences of the Mexican project, failed to approach the same levels of PR success. The High-Risk Sexual Behaviour project appeared to be relatively simple and manageable, and offered a high level of promise. It failed in its PR component, however, because the researchers had underestimated the feeling of hopelessness in the community, one-third of whom were already infected with the HIV virus, and many of whom were ill. Among the eight projects, therefore, the apparent degree of predictability of outcomes varies considerably; but the actual outcomes do not reflect the ability to predict because of the importance of factors which were not considered ahead of time.

Motivation to participate is another important theme in the eight projects. As indicated above, participants in the High-Risk Sexual Behaviour project did not engage in PR because they were so disheartened by the appalling effects of the AIDS epidemic, and saw no hope of improvement because of their actions in the project. Workers in Mexico, on the other hand, felt that their participation could lead directly to better working conditions and better person health. The Biodiversity project has a high level of appeal because of the international sense of urgency about disappearing plant varieties, and because of the scientific respect for indigenous knowledge about genetic diversity. No doubt all of the projects include professionals whose careers and incomes depend, in part, on their participation. Others may be attracted to community-based projects because of their popular appeal, or because of their own sense of community

responsibility. More needs to be known about the motivation for personal, institutional, or community involvement because this motivation is a requirement for project success. The literature on PR often naively implies that the sheer joy of collaboration, empowerment, or community action is sufficient motivation to ensure participation by all stakeholders. On the contrary, the sources of motivation vary considerably, and they must be present if project failure is to be avoided.

Transferability is another theme which emerges when examining the eight projects. The best examples are the Mexico/Zimbabwe projects, where the results of PR in the Mexico plant were used to help design the Zimbabwe project. IDRC supported this collaboration, as well as the preparation of a joint professional paper by researchers in the two countries (Loewenson, Laurell, and Hogstedt, 1993). The transfer of PR from Mexico to Zimbabwe had very limited success, however. Learning, replication, and transferability are important goals in the FSUS and Hillside Agriculture projects, where an explicit component of the projects is to determine the extent to which findings in one location (e.g. country or watershed) may be successfully used in others. Similarly, the Biodiversity project aims to discover plant varieties, and methods of producing and conserving those varieties, which may be transferred among locations. Explicitly or implicitly, all of the projects anticipate PR findings which will produce knowledge or actions which will be of use in sites other than the one where the project is located.

Another goal of most of the projects is **capacity-building** – the capacity of institutions to undertake effective PR, the capacity of communities to take greater responsibility for identifying, studying and solving their own problems, and the capacity of individuals to engage in PR. This is closely tied to the concept of **sustainability**, whereby local people will develop the capacity to sustain themselves long after external experts have left the area. These goals are stated most clearly in the Hillsides Agriculture project, which envisages a time after the completion of the project when local communities will be able to conduct their own agricultural research and development (sometimes with the help of nearby professionals) in order to continue successful farming in a sustainable fashion. In the eight projects capacity-building is closely associated with training, and with the learning that is expected to come from the experience of people and institutions working together. WARF has already developed considerable capacity to administer research funding and to oversee PR at the community level. FSUS has been firmly established as an organization, and is ready to move to another phase of development, now based in Africa. None of the projects provides a very precise definition of capacity-building, and term remains rather elusive. Nevertheless, WARF and FSUS provide evidence that the capacity to foster PR is attainable.

Some of the projects raise questions related to **ethics and responsibility**. The Mexico project is a clear example, as it involved workers who ended up losing their jobs because of their participation in the project. Plant management was responsible for the

firings, but one must also ask about the possible responsibility of the external researchers, the union, and the project funders. Perhaps no-one could anticipate the outcome ahead of time; but the experience of this project points out the need to think very clearly about possible outcomes, and about the responsibility assumed by those promoting such projects. PR is very demanding of people's energy -- far more so than in traditional research; and this commitment needs to be carefully weighed against the expected rewards or outcomes of the research. The raising of **false expectations** is a serious ethical issue. Potential participants in the High-Risk Sexual Behaviour project determined that the possible rewards from PR did not justify their commitment, and they declined to take an active role in the project. The Women in Community Development project raised many false expectations, at least in the communities visited by the researchers, and in the funding agency. The same expectations may have been held by the researchers, however; and it may have been lack of experience more than anything else which was the root of the problem.

One could examine the eight projects from the perspective of other themes, but the analysis provided here touches on the major factors which distinguish this set of projects. Other factors will be considered in a more comprehensive consideration of a framework for PR, discussed in a subsequent section.

Levels of Success

To some extent this section is redundant, since the preceding analysis offered many evaluative comments about the degree of success achieved in specific aspects of all eight projects. One way of undertaking an overall evaluation of success would be to assess each project according to each of the themes or factors considered above (i.e. the extent to which the meaning of PR is clear, the degree of fit with local cultures, the training of participants, leadership, etc.). One could record this assessment as an exhaustive text, in a graphical matrix with evaluative comments within appropriate cells, in some combination of both, or in some other manner. This raises a number of problems, however, including the norms against which performance should be measured, the performance indicators which should be used, the types of measurement to be employed, and the manner in which the information should be aggregated to yield an overall evaluation. These issues will be considered in a general way in a subsequent section.

Each of the eight projects has demonstrated some degree of success, and also some lack of success or, at least, risk. The Women in Community Development project was clearly too ambitious, and represented a rather naive attempt to undertake very comprehensive PR with researchers who were inappropriately trained. It did raise local consciousness about health-related problems, particularly among male members of the community. The Mexico Metal Workers project was highly

successful in operationalizing PR within the workplace, but unsuccessful in that the workers lost their jobs for political reasons. The Zimbabwe Workers project resulted in important consciousness-raising about health and safety problems in the workplace, and involved the training of a cadre of researchers to undertake PR within industrial sites. The project suffered, however, from a lack of effective leadership, a very large size without appropriate management procedures, and a tendency to pursue political issues rather than high-quality PR. The High-Risk Sexual Behaviour project had a very attractive and compelling rationale for involving local stakeholders in PR, but it failed to engage them because of their lack of personal motivation to participate. It did result in the gathering of useful health data by conventional means. The Food Systems Under Stress project has had a successful beginning, partly because of very effective leadership by the project co-ordinator. The next phase of the project will be more dependent on local leadership. Its success will depend, in part, on the maintenance of the active interest and involvement of researchers in many widely-separated locations, and on the extent to which the research findings can really lead to an improvement in the problems related to food insecurity. The Sustainable Hillside Agriculture project has also had an encouraging start, and it is administered by a highly successful research centre (CIAT). Success has varied among the three initial field sites. The task of integrating research findings and interventions among three watersheds, involving a mix of research by local community members and nearby professionals, is very challenging. The Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Programme has the advantage of focussing on a cause to which many professionals around the world feel

strongly committed. The project is very large and complex, however; and involves funding from several donors. Effective co-ordination among all of these stakeholders will be required if the project is to achieve full success. Similarly, the West African Rural Foundation is very large, quite complex, and involves a number of donors. Success to date reflects extremely effective organization and training within the small staff. Some NGOs have worked with WARF, and other have been unable to accept the conditions attached to participation. Future success will depend, in part, on the maintenance of effective control in the central office, and on very ambitious fund-raising.

Field Trip to Kenya

The field trip to Kenya, although of short duration (February 16 to 26), enabled the principal investigator to observe a number of PR-related projects first-hand, and to interview a number of researchers well experienced with PR methodology. Kenya was chosen as a field site because it is known as one of the places where certain PR techniques (e.g. PRA) have long been utilized and developed, because it is the home of many persons well-versed in PR methodology, and because it is an area familiar to the principal investigator.

Projects Visited in the Field

Projects for field visits were selected in two independent ways. With the help of local IDRC staff, the research assistant in Nairobi prepared a list of those projects which best exemplified PR. At the same time, the research assistant in Ottawa generated a list of suitable projects using the IDRIS computer database, after receiving advice from staff in the Ottawa Office. The most notable feature of the two lists was that only one project was common to both. Once the two lists were compared it emerged that the IDRC EARO Office did not have any information for some of the projects on the "Ottawa" list. Similarly, it required some considerable tracking in Ottawa to obtain information about the projects suggested in Nairobi. The situation reflected the fact that, under the IDRC system, some projects are administered from Ottawa, and others from the regional offices. It would appear that there is often limited knowledge in one office about projects administered from the other. The issue also demonstrated the limitations of using the IDRIS database for selecting projects using key words.

Ultimately, **seven projects**, described in detail in Appendix 6, **were selected for study during the trip to Kenya**. Five were visited in the field, along with the corresponding IDRC project officer, the project director, the research assistant, and a host of other interested persons. Opportunity was provided for discussions with both project leaders and the intended beneficiaries. Field sites were visited for a few hours each, which allowed for some quick impressions and for a few interviews. Rather than

allow for any overall assessment of the projects, the field visits provided a good opportunity to investigate examples of various forms of PR. The two remaining projects were not visited on site, but their project directors were interviewed at length.

The seven projects studied in Kenya included the following: Artisanal Fisheries (3-P-88-0332), Community-Based Evaluation of Water Quality (3-P-89-0283), Social Forestry (91-0029), African Research Utilization Network (ARUNET) (92-0080), Urban Poverty and Survival Strategies (92-1105), Elangata Wuas Ecosystem Management Programme (92-8454), and Community-Based Health Information and Planning (93-8480). The projects are examined below by theme and by level of success, in a manner similar to that used for the projects studied in Ottawa.

The meaning and form of PR was not clearly enunciated in most of the projects, although there was more reference to specific research methods than was the case for the projects examined in Ottawa. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) was used in the Social Forestry, Urban Poverty, and Community-Based Health projects, so at least this component of PR was documented. PRA is a commonly-used procedure in Kenya, and it follows a format which is somewhat standardized. It is an extractive method, particularly useful for engaging those with limited literacy in identifying local problems and potential solutions. Its use was particularly noteworthy in the Health project, where PRA was used to identify information that could be incorporated in a state-of-the-art Geographic Information System. The Urban Poverty

project also included a well-documented workshop dealing with action research. Beyond these specific forms of PR, the project leaders made frequent reference to participation by community members, but the forms of participation were not clear. In the Artisanal Fisheries project the women fish-smokers were somewhat marginal to actual decision-making; and their motivation for participating was often just the prospect of acquiring food (smoked fish) for their families. Community groups, usually dominated by women, appeared at all of the field sites. The women usually performed songs and dances, and they made the IDRC visitors most welcome. There was little evidence, however, that they played a central role in PR aside from taking part in PRA. One villager at the Health project site associated participation with contributing personal funds towards the construction of a health education centre.

Several Kenyans expressed the view that **local villagers have a long-established tradition of looking to outsiders to tell them what to do in order to achieve development**. This cultural trait, a legacy from the colonial era, may account for the high degree of "mobilized" participation that was apparent at most of the project sites. The Assistant Chief in a village involved with the Health project ended his welcoming speech with the promise that his villagers would "do whatever they were told to do". Women in the Artisanal Fisheries and Social Forestry projects demonstrated their local technologies (fish smoking and the construction of clay stoves) on command from the visiting Kenyan authorities. Villagers had been effectively trained to monitor water quality in local wells in the Water Quality project, but this involved clear direction

from outsiders. This form of participation appears to fit well with local cultural tradition. It may also account for the highly directive form of project leadership which was apparent at several sites (Artisanal Fisheries and Elangata Wuas, in particular).

Training is an important component of the Elangata Wuas project, within which a select group of local school-leavers is trained to participate in the observation and classification of local life-forms. Similarly, local villagers were trained to test and monitor wells in the Water project. The ARUNET project involves special efforts to train researchers in PR, both through the granting of research funds to local research organizations, and through the sponsoring of special workshops.

Most of the project leaders were highly articulate leaders, with advanced education. Consequently, they were far removed in experience, training and culture from the intended beneficiaries in the local communities. The leader of the Health project, although from another part of Kenya, had moved to the local community; and he appeared to be totally dedicated to working with community members in order to achieve success. The project director of the Elangata Wuas project, of European origin, lived in Nairobi, but spent periods of time on the project sites. Similarly, the Canadian researcher primarily responsible for the Water project had once lived and worked in the local community for many months. On the other hand, the project director for the Artisanal Fisheries project, who lived in Nairobi, lacked familiarity with some of the practices of the fish-smokers; and the director of the ARUNET project, an outsider

to Kenya, had managed to alienate the membership of the local ARUNET Kenya group.

Understanding the local political context is important for analyzing some of the projects. The best examples are the Social Forestry and the Elangata Wuas projects, where the special interest in land use and settlement relates to changing conditions of land tenure. In the former project, uses of a forest area only recently accessible to the local population are being investigated. The Elangata Wuas project is designed, in part, to investigate forms of land use and settlement which will be sustainable following the privatization of lands formerly held communally by the Masai people.

Internal organization of the projects is generally simple and top-down. Local women's groups are engaged in project activities, but they tend to follow the direction of project directors quite closely. None of the projects is large enough to warrant the kind of hierarchical administrative structure observed in the larger projects studied in Ottawa. The Social Forestry and Elangata Wuas projects are highly complex and interdisciplinary, involving forestry, biological conservation, agriculture, biological research, and potential eco-tourism. They are effectively managed, however, by small groups of researchers and administrators.

Methodological research is particularly important in the Urban Poverty,

Elangata Wuas, and Health projects. The Urban Poverty project is designed to develop methodologies which can be used in subsequent phases of the project. A form of Participatory Urban Appraisal has been developed for use in the poorest parts of Nairobi. The Action Research, referred to above, has also been investigated for possible future use. The Elangata Wuas project has experimented with the training of local para-taxonomists who can help identify and classify life-forms. Careful observation of local wildlife has also led to some original research findings concerning the feeding habits of vultures. The Health project is experimenting with the use of PRA for providing input for the new GIS system.

The outcomes of the projects are generally difficult to predict, and they are not necessarily related to what one sees or hears in the field. The Artisanal Fisheries project appears to be highly successful because of the construction of several experimental fish smokers, and because of the actions of the local women during site visits. However, the marketing of the smoked fish appears to be a large problem; and the women on the site reveal, during interviews, that their visits to the site are quite infrequent. The Social Forestry and Elangata Wuas projects anticipate that eco-tourism will become a source of community income in the future. It is difficult to imagine, however, that many tourists will find their ways to these remote, somewhat inhospitable locations. The ARUNET project would appear to meet an important need for African researchers, but the high cost and a degree of local alienation are detracting characteristics.

Among the motives for participating in the projects is the need for commercial business. PRA is often provided in Kenya by professional organizations, who provide contracted service to projects such as the Health project. This should lead to high levels of quality in PR, and to a degree of standardization in the conduct of PRA.

Transferability is a goal of most of the projects. The Urban Poverty project is searching for solutions to community problems that might be applicable to both Nairobi and Mombasa. The Artisanal Fisheries project is supposed to develop technologies that can be used by fish-smokers in several communities along the shores of Lake Victoria. The GIS system being developed in the Health project is to be a prototype for other communities. The video produced from the Water project should facilitate the development of indigenous water monitoring in other villages.

All of the projects involve a capacity-building dimension, but this is most apparent for the ARUNET project. It is designed to provide a network among researchers in several African countries, and to help improve their collective capacity to bridge the gap between research and application. The other projects are designed, in part, to build capacity in local communities to assume greater responsibility for planning and management.

The major ethical consideration in the projects concerns the danger of raising false expectations among community members. Examples include what

appear to be exaggerated estimates of the market demand for smoked fish, and unrealistic assessments of the potential for eco-tourism.

Levels of Success

The Artisanal Fisheries project has led to the development of technical innovations in the smoking of fish, and has improved the food supply for project participants. It has failed, however, to establish a viable industry that can compete with the large fish-processing companies along the shores of Lake Victoria. The Water project has produced a video of a very successful effort to involve local villagers in the monitoring of water quality. It would appear, however, that the video is not widely distributed to communities who could benefit from its use. The Social Forestry project has engaged the local community in investigating several uses for the nearby forest. The resulting patterns of resource use are sustainable, but continued progress in the project will depend on the extent to which commercial markets for products (e.g. clay stoves) and services (e.g. eco-tourism) can be found. ARUNET responds to an important need for networking among African researchers, but personal alienation appears to have reduced the positive effects of the project. The Urban Poverty project has enjoyed success in its first phase, despite a disappointing experience with outside experts in Action Research. The Elangata Wuas project is conceptually very attractive, as it ties together efforts to achieve local sustainability with conservation, scientific investigation, and close ties with the National Museums. Its great complexity, and

heavy reliance on the project director, make its future somewhat uncertain. The Community-Based Health project is highly innovative, combines the latest GIS technology with PRA within the community, and is highly dependent on one, very effective project leader. The future of the project will depend on the continued presence of that leader.

Other Interviews and Meetings

The principal investigator visited with **Dr. Francis Lelo**, a professor at Egerton University who has established a local centre for Participatory Rural Appraisal. Originally educated at York University and Clark University at the graduate level, Dr. Lelo and his associates have developed a local version of PRA which they believe best suits Kenyan circumstances. They run a summer course for the training of PRA experts, which attracts students from around the world. An important part of the Egerton philosophy is the belief that PRA can only be taught within local communities, and that the training requires a minimum of three weeks. This is in contrast to PRA training in some world centres, where courses as short as one day are offered.

A workshop in PR was held at the IDRC office in Nairobi on the last day of the trip to Kenya. Experts from a number of offices and centres joined some of the IDRC staff to discuss a range of issues related to PR. Much of the discussion concerned the latest PR initiatives of the workshop participants (e.g. PR in the World

Bank, and the work of ARUNET Kenya), the origins of PR in Kenya, and the lack of collective learning about the conducting of PR. Most of the workshop participants were enthusiastic about the use of PR, and little critical commentary was offered.

A Framework for Examining PR

Many researchers and project administrators have lamented the lack of a common framework for examining PR -- for considering project proposals, for planning project activities, or for evaluating PR. Some have argued that a common framework could stifle innovation, and might inadvertently discourage useful developments in research and intervention, particularly if the framework were too detailed or prescriptive. It can also be argued that any framework designed to examine PR in development settings should be formulated only in consultation with representatives from the South or other developing communities. Consequently, the framework described here is very tentative, and should be regarded only as an initial suggestion

Definitions

Participatory research in its fullest form is characterized by involvement of the intended beneficiaries of the research in the identification of problems, the research design, the conducting of the research, evaluation of the results, the identification of solutions to the problems, implementation of the solutions, and

evaluation of the results. PR involves continuous learning from the research experience, as well as action to remedy the perceived problems. Among the participants in PR are individuals or groups with different levels of experience and training, who collaborate in order to combine their respective strengths in the common pursuit of knowledge and action.

While the above definition describes a pure form of PR, many **different degrees of PR occur along a continuum** ranging from little participation by beneficiaries through to full involvement. Participation may be either spontaneous, or mobilized by other researchers.

PR often involves one or more of the following methodologies or terms: action research, action learning, participatory rural appraisal, search conferencing, participatory mapping and modelling, matrix ranking, transect walks, Chapatti diagrams, participatory art or theatre, seasonality diagramming, or focus-group sessions. It does not include entirely extractive methods, such as rapid rural appraisal or public surveys, nor such inactive techniques as participant observation.

Components of an Evaluation Framework

A PR project or activity can be assessed, either before the project begins, part-way through its implementation, or after it has been completed, by focussing on a

number of components which bear on its degree of success. Table 11 lists 30 such components, arranged under ten general categories. These components or factors proved to be important in analyzing the success of the 15 IDRC projects examined in this report. Table 11 provides a schematic framework which can serve as a guide for the assessment of any project/activity. It also provides boxes through which each factor may be assessed as "highly unsatisfactory", "unsatisfactory", "satisfactory", or "highly satisfactory". Using the form provided in Table 11, the evaluation framework can be an important aid in determining what factors to examine, and in visualizing an overall assessment of a given project.

The first grouping of factors refers to the **general nature of the research problem**, the anticipated technical solutions, and the possible actions or interventions. By its general nature, a project may be judged to be addressing an important or an unimportant problem, it may involve potential solutions or actions which are sensible or trivial, and it may or may not address a problem for which PR is a reasonable methodology. While the outcome of no project can be precisely determined ahead of time, some assessment of the general nature of the problem is useful in deciding whether or not it should be supported, and through PR in particular.

The second grouping includes a number of factors relating specifically to the nature of PR within the project. It focusses consideration on the meaning of PR within the project, the specific process of PR, the origin of problem identification, the

TABLE 11: EVALUATION FRAMEWORK FOR PR PROJECTS

	FACTOR	RATING H. Unsat.	Unsatis.	Satis.	H. Sat.
problem	Nature of Research Problem				
	Technical Solutions for Problems				
	Action/Intervention				
PR component	Clarity of Meaning of PR				
	Process of PR				
	Origin of Identification of Problems				
	Entry Point				
	Methodology				
	Appropriateness of forms of PR				
	Selection of Participants				
	Ownership of Results of Research				
partic's.	Leadership/Qualifications of PIs				
	Training of Participants				
	Motivation for Participants				
org'n.	Internal Organization				
	Manageability				
culture	Degree of Fit with Local Culture				
	Political Context				
	Micro/meso/macro relations				
sustain'y.	Transferability of Results				
	Capacity Building				
	Sustainability of PR				
communication	Language capabilities				
	Communication among Participants				
	Production of Written Materials				
	Forms of Record Keeping				
	Communication of Results				
	Degree of Risk				
	Timing/Time Horizon				
	Ethics and Responsibility				

entry point through which the participants begin to work on the project, the overall methodology, the appropriateness of specific forms of PR, the selection of participants, and the ownership of the results of the research. As discussed in preceding sections of this report, these issues are rarely addressed in much detail within projects (at least, this consideration is not reflected in the written record of the projects examined in this report). Projects could be improved if these various components were considered at some length, both during early planning stages, and during subsequent assessments.

The third grouping of components includes **qualities of the project participants**. Particular attention is paid to the leadership characteristics and qualifications of the principal investigators, the PR training of the participants, and the motivation for all participants to be involved in the project. Again, careful attention to these factors can enhance the analysis and assessment of a PR project.

The fourth grouping relates to **internal organization and management**, which is an essential consideration of any type of project. It is worth highlighting, however, because even a community-based project, which may involve a high degree of general good-will and cooperative activity, requires excellent organization and management, shared or otherwise. This becomes even more critical for very large PR projects with several levels or hierarchies of activity.

The fifth grouping concerns the **cultural/political context** within which a project

takes place. Several of the case studies demonstrated the great importance of understanding this context, and of planning project activities appropriately. Special attention needs to be given to the interfaces between activities at different levels (i.e. micro, meso, and macro levels), and to the creation of excellent relations among participants operating at different levels. Similarly, a project or activity undertaken at one particular level (e.g. a local community) needs to consciously consider the most effective manner of relating to officials at other levels (e.g. a provincial of national government).

The sixth grouping includes factors relating to capacity building, the transferability of results, and general **sustainability** of the PR. None of these can be taken for granted, and they merit special assessment at various stages of project planning and implementation.

Good **communications** are essential for any PR project, and the seventh grouping includes five factors related to the communications process: language capabilities of the participants; the frequency and forms of communication among project participants; the types, qualities, and use of written materials; forms of record keeping; and communication of the results of the research/actions, both within the project and beyond.

Finally, three additional factors are listed, but not included within larger groups.

These include the **degree of risk of the project**, both for the project as a whole, and for the participants; the suitability of the **timing** of the project; and the extent to which **issues of ethics and responsibility** have been considered within the project design.

The framework outlined in Table 11 can assist in the evaluation of projects by providing a checklist of factors to be examined. Before the list can be used for evaluation, however, **norms and performance indicators need to be determined for each variable**. For some variables, such as the preparation of written documents, an outsider can probably assume certain norms and indicators, and can safely offer an evaluation of project success. For many, probably most, variables, however, the norms and performance indicators need to be determined either by the project participants themselves, or by the participants in co-operation with the outside evaluator. Variables that should be considered jointly include the forms and effectiveness of participation in the project, communication among participants, capacity-building, and many others. **The most effective and useful form of evaluation will be participatory.** Ideally, the procedures, variables, and criteria to be used in evaluation should be determined when the project is first planned and initiated.

Evaluations using this framework could take many forms, including completed tables (such as Table 11), written texts, videos, recorded meetings, or some combination of these or other forms. The nature of the assessment will vary, depending on whether the evaluation is undertaken at the planning stage of the project,

at some time during its implementation, or following its completion. The quality and utility of the evaluation, particularly during later stages of the project, will be enhanced if the project participants have a role in determining the forms of evaluation output before the assessment begins.

Conclusions

(1) **IDRC is a leader in both its support for development-related participatory research (PR), and in its accumulated knowledge about the method.** While the methods used in this study for determining the amount of PR activity supported by other international agencies are not perfect, they reveal that IDRC is a most important agency in its support for PR. This is probably an outgrowth of its primary commitment to development research, and of its long-standing philosophy of empowering those who seek to be responsible for their own processes of development. IDRC has been fortunate in having partners in the South who have shared its interests in development through community participation in research and intervention. Related to IDRC's support for PR is the development of a cadre of staff professionals with relevant expertise and experience. This group should be regarded as one of the institution's major sources of strength.

(2) **As IDRC makes its strategic plans for the years ahead, it can legitimately treat PR as an area of institutional strength** – an area of "comparative advantage", to use an economic term. This could be used to help define areas of specialization, or as a basis for approaching other agencies to plan joint ventures. It could be seen as an area of strength that helps to fill a special need or "niche" among the world's supporters of international development. Or, as an alternative, it could be treated as a method which should be at least considered for use in every project or institution that receives IDRC support. These two alternative views of the role of PR in future planning deserve serious debate. Whatever decision is taken, strategic plans for IDRC's future would be strengthened if the particular role of PR as an area of specialization were clearly articulated.

(3) **This study has demonstrated that PR can be an important method in projects of any size**. PR can be very effective within a small community, and with a small budget. It can also be a powerful tool within very large projects (e.g. WARF), and as a part of comprehensive projects that may involve several subject areas and methodologies (e.g. the Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Programme). If IDRC chooses to move in the direction of fewer, larger projects, there need be no reason to reduce PR activity. It could be argued, on the contrary, that larger, more complex projects may have a particularly great need for participatory processes, either among researchers and institutions or among community members.

(4) **The history of IDRC support for PR reveals that the range of types of PR and types of projects is very great.** Further, both the types and applications of PR have been changing significantly. The projects in which PR may best approach its potential for community empowerment or for generating important data for development planning (e.g. the Sustainable Hillside Agriculture project) are still underway, and the ultimate results are still unknown. This points to the need for continual development in both the theory and practice of PR, and to the need for IDRC and other agencies to learn cumulatively from experience.

(5) None of the projects examined in this study has been adequately evaluated by the principal investigator. The information in the IDRC files is unsatisfactory for full evaluation or impact analysis, and time did not permit any exhaustive evaluation in field sites. Such evaluations will be needed if IDRC is to learn from its accumulating experiences. The Evaluation Unit has already recommended a simple procedure for maintaining some evaluation information (Evaluation Unit, 1992), but this process would be greatly enhanced if participatory evaluations were required of future projects. These evaluations can be relatively inexpensive to undertake, and they are extremely valuable to the institutions undertaking the research and to the intended beneficiaries. IDRC has not required exhaustive project evaluations in the past, which is understandable in view of the cumbersome techniques traditionally available. Further, IDRC has achieved some of its success through a careful screening of projects and institutions at the "proposal" stage, and a good deal of "trust" in the researchers after projects have been

approved. This is consistent with the "talent scout" approach, where IDRC has attempted to identify promising researchers and institutions in the South, and then given them support to get on with their work. The time may be right, however, to **require more formalization of the evaluation process, particularly through participatory evaluation, so that the chances of institutional learning are enhanced**.

(6) **While the use of PR has become more wide-spread, considerable confusion abounds concerning terminology, types of PR, theoretical underpinnings, and operational practice.** Some of this confusion may be due to increasing sophistication of the method, particularly as it is employed in more diverse settings. Some have argued, in fact, that PR should not aim for standardization, as this could inhibit the development of appropriate types of analysis within specific contexts. On the other hand, institutions and practitioners need to have a common PR language so that they can properly communicate their ideas. **A common definition and framework for examining PR has been suggested in this study.**

(7) **As PR continues to develop, the field requires not only more careful definition, but also practice by those who are professionally trained.** General reference to "community participation" should not be adequate in a research proposal. Projects need to specify what kinds of participation are expected, and also the training or qualifications of those who will be conducting the research. This trend is already

evident in the more recent PR projects supported by IDRC. For example, the PRA undertaken for the Social Forestry and the Community-Based Health Information and Planning projects in Kenya were conducted by people who had been professionally trained. If professional training is not undertaken, PR runs the risk of poor or inconsistent research and development practices.

(8) Related to the need for professional training is **the need for overt ethical consideration in projects involving PR**. Recently, some PR practitioners have published statements concerning professional practice, ethics, equity, preconditions for engagement, practice, and local human resource support and development (Notes on Participatory Learning and Action, 1995). They have also suggested policies or commitments for institutions undertaking PR which deserve careful consideration.

(9) **This study has discovered very little evidence of PR of the "classic" type -- i.e. where the potential beneficiaries determine the need for research, and participate fully in research design, implementation, evaluation, and modification/intervention.** Some of the work in Latin America probably comes closest to this ideal, and may lead to real community empowerment. Much more common is a type of "mobilized participation" where outsiders obtain the co-operation of local people in some restricted aspect of the research (e.g. the Artisanal Fisheries project). There are, of course, many variations along this continuum, often highly dependent on the cultural or political context, or on the abilities and character of particular leaders. It is

important to acknowledge the significant difference between the rhetoric of theoretical, liberating PR and the rather modest, limited type of local participation which is much more common.

(10) **The literature, both academic and practical, is somewhat deficient in critical assessments of PR**, as most practitioners to date have tended to be "converts", often exhibiting idealistic zeal. Similarly, the IDRC files contain little critical commentary on the PR projects. The principal investigator was disappointed not to hear more creative criticism on PR than he did in Kenya. PR is a challenging field, in both theory and practice. If progress in the field is to occur, more open, critical assessments of project performance should be encouraged.

(11) **This study has presented an evaluation framework which should be of value in assessing PR projects and activities.** It is based on an analysis of the PR projects supported by IDRC, but it should be of general use for those involved with participatory research in a variety of settings. Any detailed consideration of the framework would benefit greatly through participation by representatives from the South or other developing regions. If IDRC wishes to further pursue the development of PR, then it might usefully bring together practitioners from a number of regions to compare experiences, and to help test a common framework for the assessment of PR projects.

REFERENCES

Absalom, E. et al., "Sharing Our Concerns and Looking to the Future", Notes on Participatory Learning and Action, London, International Institute for Environment and Development, No. 22, 1995, pp. 5-10.

Beaulieu, R.-C. and V. Manoukian, Participatory Development: A Brief Review of CIDA's Experience and Potential, Ottawa, Canadian International Development Agency, 1994.

Bernard, A.K., Participatory Research in IDRC: State-of-the-Art and Practice, Ottawa, IDRC, 1987.

"Birth of a Baby", ARUNET News, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1993.

Chambers, R., "The Origins and Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal", World Development, Vol. 22, No. 7, 1994, pp. 953-969.

Deshler, D. and Ewert, M., Participatory Action Research: Traditions and Major Assumptions, Ithaca, Cornell University, distributed via Par-talk electronic network, 1995.

de Vreede, M., Elangata Wuas Ecosystem Management Programme, Nairobi, National Museums of Kenya, 1994.

Ellsworth, L., Institution-Building in International Development: A Case Study of The West Africa Rural Foundation, New York, 1994.

Evaluation Strategy of the Evaluation Unit, Corporate Affairs and Initiatives Division of the IDRC, IDRC, 1992.

Fals-Borda, O.,and M. A. Rahman (eds.), Action and Knowledge: Breaking the Monopoly with Participatory Action Research, New York, Intermediate Technology/Apex, 1991.

Forget, G., "Steeling Themselves With Knowledge", IDRC Reports, Ottawa, IDRC, April, 1992, pp. 10-11.

Freire, P., Pedagogy of the Oppressed, New York, The Seabury Press, 1968.

Grisdale, D. et al., Participatory Research and the Health Sciences Division, Ottawa, IDRC, 1989.

Harris, C., "Working to Stay Alive", IDRC Reports, Ottawa, IDRC, April, 1992, pp. 7-9.

IDRC Staff Meeting, Ottawa, IDRC, Videotape, April 4, 1995.

Jefremovas, V., Women and Community Health (3-P-87-0033): Chronology, Evaluation, Background, Ottawa, IDRC, 1990.

Laurell, C., M. Noriega, S. Martinez, and J. Villegas, "Participatory Research on Workers' Health", Soc. Sci. Med., Vol. 34, No. 6, 1992, pp. 603-613.

Learning Group on Participatory Development, The World Bank and Participation, Washington, World Bank, 1994.

Loewenson, R., A.C. Laurell, and C. Hogstedt, Participatory Research in Occupational Health (unpublished), 1993.

Morley, D., "Resource Analysis as Action Research", in P. Wilkinson and W. Found (eds.), Resource Analysis Research in Developing Countries: The Experiences of Ontario Geographers, Toronto, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, 1990, pp. 1-16.

Mosse, D., "Authority, Gender and Knowledge: Theoretical Reflections on the Practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal", Development and Change, Vol. 25, 1994, pp. 497-526.

NETAD, Application of Participatory Rural Appraisal Methodology in Establishing Community Health Information Needs: a Case Study of Kibwezi and Makueni Division, Makueni District, Kenya, Nairobi, 1994.

Oduol, W., (edited by N. George), Participatory Evaluation: the SHEWAS Hygiene Education Case Study, Siaya District, Western Kenya, Nairobi, ARUNET, 1994.

Ogutu, G.E.M. (ed.), Artisanal Fisheries of Lake Victoria, Kenya: Options for Management, Production and Marketing, Proceedings of a Workshop held in Kisumu, Kenya on November 24-26, 1988, Nairobi, 1992.

Ongugo, P.O., PRA (Participatory Rapid Appraisal) with the Community Living Around Got Ramogi Forest, Nairobi, Kenya Forestry Research Institute, 1995.

Oranga, H.M. and E. Nordberg, Participatory Community-Based Health Information Systems for Rural Communities, (unpublished), 1994.

Pottier, J., Food Systems Under Stress (FSUS) Project -- Phase 1: Project Report, London, University of London, 1994.

Prasada, C, The Livelihood Perspective: A Gender Sensitive Conceptual Framework for Participatory Development, Toronto, M.E.S. Major Paper, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, 1995.

Samaki: The Aquatic Resource Magazine, Vol. 1, Nos. 1-4, 1992.

Stockdale, P., Personian Internationalism in Practice: The International Development Research Centre, Montreal, McGill University, Dep't. of Political Science, Ph. D. Dissertation, 1995.

Stromquist, N., "Action Research: a New Sociological Approach in Developing Countries", IDRC Reports, Ottawa, IDRC, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1984, pp. 24-25.

Woodhouse, M., "Consumer Involvement in Bacteriological Testing of Well Water in Kibwezi, Kenya", Waterlines, Vol. 8, No. 4, 1989, pp. 22-24.

Woodhouse, M., "Essential Information Found In Rural Homesteads", The Review, Nairobi, Kibwezi Water Project, June, 1990, pp. 1-4.

Woodhouse, M., "Natural Indicators of Shallow Ground Water in Kibwezi Division, Kenya", Journal of the East Africa Natural History Society and National Museum, Vol. 81, No. 197, 1991, pp. 1-13.

Working Group Paper, Participatory Research in IDRC, Ottawa, IDRC, 1988.

APPENDIX 1

MEMBERS OF THE PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Anne Bernard (Social Science, Social Policy)

Guy Bessette (Information Sciences and Systems, Information and Communication Systems and Networks)

Fred Carden (Chair) (Corporate Affairs, Evaluation Unit)

Jean-Michel Labatut (Social Science, Social Policy)

Yianna Lambrou (Environment and Natural Resources, Environmental Policy)

Bertha Mo (Health Sciences; Health, Society and the Environment)

Gisele Morin-Labatut (Corporate Affairs, Special Initiatives)

APPENDIX 2

AGENCIES ASKED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION CONCERNING PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH

Aga Khan Foundation
United States Agency for International Development
Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
Board on Science and Technology for International Development
Canadian International Development Agency
Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation
Charities Evaluation Services
Commonwealth Secretariat
Consortium for International Development
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
Danish International Development Agency
Deutsche Gesellschaft Fur Technische Zusammenarbeit
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Food and Agricultural Organization
Ford Foundation
Harvard Institute for International Development
Inter-American Development Bank
International Institute for Environment and Development
International Labour Organization
International Service for National Agricultural Research
Japan International Cooperation Agency
Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations
Medical Research Council of Canada
National Research Council of Canada
Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development -- Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry
Overseas Development Administration
Advisory Council for Scientific Research in Development Problems
Rockefeller Foundation
Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation and Developing Countries
United Nations Centre for Science and Technology Development
United Nations Children's Fund
United Nations Development Program
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
United Nations Population Fund

United Nations Industrial Development Organization
United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation
United Nations Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance
International Centre for Tropical Agriculture
World Bank

APPENDIX 3

INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED DURING THE PROJECT

Individuals Within IDRC, Ottawa

Corporate Affairs and Initiatives Division

Fred Carden, Chris Da Silva, Bohdana Dutka, Gisele Morin-Labatut, Sitoo Mukerji, Mary Ndiga Kibuka, Chris Smart, Terry Smutylo

Environment and Natural Resources Division

Ron Ayling, Saido Koala, Yianna Lambrou, Ken MacKay, Ronnie Vernooy, Joachim Voss

Health Sciences Division

Jenny Cervinskas, Gilles Forget, Bertha Mo, Graham Reid

Information Sciences and Systems Division

Guy Bessette, Paul McConnell

Social Science Division

Anne Bernard, Denise Deby, Jean-Michel Labatut, Daniel Morales-Gomez

Library

Bev Chataway

Regional Directors

Gerry Bourrier (West and Central Africa)
Fawzy Kishk (Middle East and North Africa)
Eva Rathgeber (Eastern and Southern Africa)
Randy Spence (South-East and East Asia)
Anthony Tillett (Latin America and the Caribbean)

Individuals in Kenya

Joseph Ayieko (Egerton University)
Sandra Baldwin (IDRC)
Dr. Oguttu Gilbert (University of Nairobi)
Helen Hambly (IDRC)
Charity Kabutha (WINROCK International)
Ruth King'oria (IDRC)
Dr. Kabiru Kinyanjui (IDRC)
Elizabeth Kuria (Kenyatta University)
Dr. Francis Lelo (Egerton University)
Rose Lindonde (UNDP - World Bank)
Dr. Mbatha V. (University of Nairobi)
R.K.N. Mwadime (University of Nairobi)
Muthoni Mwangi (IDRC)
Helen Mwanzi (University of Nairobi)
Abidha Ombech Naphtaly (ARUNET Secretariat)
Dr. Peter Ngau (University of Nairobi)
Kiragu Njuku (National Environmental Secretariat)
Nzioki wa Nzioki (University of Nairobi)
Dr. Jeff Odera (Kenya Forestry Research Institute)
Peter Ombugo (Kenya Forestry Research Institute)
Dr. Hezron Oranga (African Medical and Research Foundation)
Dr. Eva Rathgeber (Regional Director, IDRC)
Flora Shiroya (IDRC)
Sarah Thurman (Ford Foundation)
Mathias de Vreede (National Museums of Kenya)
Melvin Woodhouse (consultant)

Other Individuals

Jonathan Barker (University of Toronto -- project 92-8465)
Jacques Chevalier (Carleton University -- project 90-1012)
Lynn Ellsworth (consultant, New York -- project 93-8158)
Sally Humphries (University of Guelph -- project 93-0008)
Ted Jackson (consultant, Ottawa)
Bonnie Kettel (York University)
Marie France Labreque (Laval University -- project 91-1041)
Richard Maclure (University of Ottawa)
Camilla Montecinos (co-ordinator for project 93-1012, Chile)
Pat Mooney (Rural Advancement Foundation International, Ottawa -- project 93-1012)

Johann Pottier (University of London -- project 92-8465)
Patricia Stamp (York University)
Dennis Willms (McMaster University -- project 90-0204)

APPENDIX 4

PR DOCUMENTS PROVIDED, ON REQUEST, BY INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

Ashby, J., Evaluating Technology with Farmers: A Handbook, Cali, CIAT, 1990.

Case, D.D., Community Forestry: Participatory Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation, Rome, FAO, 1989.

Case, D.D., The Community's Toolbox: the Idea, Methods and Tools for Participatory Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation in Community Forestry, Rome, FAO, 1990.

Forss, K., Participatory Evaluation: Questions and Issues, New York, UNDP, 1989.

Freudenberger, K.S., Tree and Land Tenure: Rapid Appraisal Tools, Rome, FAO, 1994.

Kumar, K., Conducting Group Interviews in Developing Countries, Washington, A.I.D., 1987.

Kumar, K., Conducting Key Informant Interviews in Developing Countries, Washington, A.I.D., 1986.

Kumar, K., Conducting Mini Surveys in Developing Countries, Washington, A.I.D., 1990.

Kumar, K., Rapid, Low-Cost Data Collection Methods for A.I.D., Washington, A.I.D., 1987.

Mezzalama, F. and S. Schumm, Working with NGOs: Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System with Non-Governmental Organizations and Governments at the Grassroots and National Levels, Geneva, UN Joint Inspection Unit, 1993.

Molnar, A., Community Forestry: Rapid Appraisal, Rome, FAO, 1989.

Scrimshaw, N.S. and G.R. Gleason, eds., Rapid Assessment Procedures: Qualitative Methodologies for Planning and Evaluation of Health Related Programmes, Boston, International Nutrition Foundation for Developing Countries, 1992.

SAREC, People's Management of Natural Resources and the Environment: Voices from a Workshop. Stockholm, 1993.

United Nations Population Fund, Quality of Family Planning Services: Evaluation Report, New York, 1994.

United Nations Population Fund, Women and Micro-Enterprises: An Assessment of UNFPA Experience, New York, 1992.

APPENDIX 5

DESCRIPTIONS/ANALYSES OF PROJECTS EXAMINED IN THE IDRC OFFICE IN OTTAWA

Women in Community Development (Asia) (3-P-87-0033)

This project, supported by IDRC through the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, was designed to introduce PR into remote communities in Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Fiji, West Samoa, and Papua New Guinea to encourage women to analyze and address community health needs. "The eventual goal is self-reliance and sustainability of health programmes developed by the women themselves in their own communities. Through the process documentation approach, the mechanisms and operational frame by which women participate in the formulation and implementation of health plans will be extricated" (Project Summary, 1987). The project was to last three years, at a cost of $351,086 ($317,156 provided by IDRC, the remainder by the recipient organization).

The project file is rich in technical reports, and also includes a useful IDRC-sponsored post-project assessment of the PR component of the work (Jefremovas, 1990). One gets the impression that a team of researchers, poorly trained in PR methods, but given very large and diverse tasks to complete within three months, were thrust into a variety of communities in Southeast Asia and the Pacific -- communities

with which they were basically unfamiliar. The communities were tribal areas, far from the main-stream of economic and cultural life within their countries. Reference is made to a number of PR approaches (e.g. formal meetings, role playing, game playing), but it appears that these techniques were somewhat unsuccessful because they were so different from the normal experiences of people within the communities. Insufficient effort was made to learn about the cultural traditions of the different sites, so that the outside researchers had little knowledge of or empathy with traditional practices and attitudes. Little time was given for the researchers to learn about local conditions within the communities.

Although this project showed much promise conceptually, it would appear that the project was basically unsuccessful from a PR point of view. The researchers, poorly prepared, were either unable to suppress their own assumptions about appropriate behaviour and health care, or were so frustrated with field conditions that they adopted an authoritative, top-down attitude. Their success at engaging women in a useful exercise of examining heath care was particularly disappointing. Some progress with interesting men in future research into health conditions was reported.

The challenge of this project was particularly great because of the great variety of local cultures involved. The degree of preparedness of the researchers, and of success, was correspondingly varied. Overall, the researchers showed little respect for

local participants; and did little to empower them. No doubt the goal to make these communities more self-sufficient so that there can be "a chance for program continuity even when outside support is withdrawn" was unrealistic in view of the difficulty of the challenge, and the lack of preparation and skill of the researchers.

Occupational Health in the Metal Industry (Mexico) (3-P-87-0155)

This project, considered to be the first truly participatory-research project sponsored through the Health Sciences Division, was designed to test the validity of research data gathered in a PR fashion by workers in an integrated steel industry (SICARTSA) in Mexico. SICARTSA, located north-west of Acapulco in the port city of Ciudad Lazaro Cardenas, is the location of one of Mexico's largest steel industries, employing about 5,000 workers, and producing 17 percent of Mexico's annual steel output. The plant had been the source of numerous complaints about job-related health hazards since its founding in 1976 (Forget, 1992). Researchers from the Metropolitan Autonomous University in Mexico City determined in 1984 that the average worker in the plant suffered from a combination of four or five health problems, acquiring a new one every two or three years. Working in concert with the workers' union, the researchers helped 830 labourers to identify and measure both their own afflictions and health-related working conditions in the plant. This PR approach was essential since the management of the plant had been unwilling to undertake any

comprehensive analysis of health conditions. Although IDRC was not involved in the initial stages of the research undertaken by the union, it did fund a second phase of the project, beginning in 1987. IDRC provided $90,760 of the $102,310 required to test the validity of the health data acquired through PR by union members in the plant (the recipient organization provided the remainder of the funding). The project was planned to take 18 months for completion.

The project enabled the researchers from the Metropolitan Autonomous University to undertake extensive medical testing of the participating workers to determine the extent to which the workers' own assessments of health problems could be substantiated by scientific testing (e.g. blood tests, X-rays, etc.). This testing involved quite sophisticated procedures, and did, in general, validate the data generated through PR (Laurell, Noriega, Martinez, and Villegas, 1992). On this basis, the researchers prepared a manual and video entitled Conocer Para Cambiar (Knowledge for Change), which has since been used extensively by unions throughout Latin America and Spain.

The project would probably have been considered a complete success if appropriate action had been taken -- i.e. the hazardous working conditions had been improved. But the management of SICARTSA, 51 percent of which was owned by the Government of Mexico, became vigorously opposed to the study as soon as the highly

negative health conditions were revealed. Although the Mexican Social Security Institute had been reporting an average of 2,000 to 3,000 cases of work-related illnesses throughout the entire country in 1988, an estimated 4,000 to 5,000 cases were found in the SICARTSA plant alone through the IDRC-supported research. In the face of this embarrassing evidence, the company undertook action to stop the study, and to bury the medical information. Ultimately, most of the workers who had participated in the study were fired; and the union, rather than fighting for better working conditions, ended up simply trying to preserve jobs for its members. The Government of Canada was subject to demonstrations outside of its embassy in Mexico City, and IDRC had to temporarily suspend the project until false allegations about its intervention in the plant were investigated.

This project demonstrates a very effective role for IDRC in supporting the highly technical component of a project aimed at validating data generated through PR -- technical research which could never be undertaken alone by a grass-roots organization within an industrial site. It also demonstrates how PR can be effectively undertaken through a local organization (the union) which is already in place. Without the interest, structure, and organizational skill of the union, it is very doubtful if this study could have ever taken place. Even though the project was ultimately unsuccessful in changing health conditions in the plant, the publication of the manual and the video have been very effective in helping to address similar health problems in

other industrial sites in Latin America and beyond. Finally, the project serves to demonstrate the political risks involved in supporting PR among groups who do not enjoy the support of the official government. This raises important ethical issues for the researchers and for IDRC.

Workers' Participation (Zimbabwe) (3-P-90-0080)

This three-year project, begun in 1990, was similar to the Mexican project described above. It was designed to build the capacity of the labour movement in Zimbabwe to undertake PR on occupational health and safety. The Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions was to train workers to conduct "rapid workplace assessments" in order to document what were believed to be wide-spread hazardous conditions in industrial sites. Local conditions were to be compared with international standards (e.g. those set by the International Labour Organization). Preliminary research had indicated that there was significant under-estimation of occupational injury and disease in official data. As part of the project, a record of all accidents, injuries and workplace diseases was to be kept by shopfloor union representatives in selected industries. An important aspect of the project was training workshops dealing with research methods to collect data relating to occupation health and safety. Research guidelines were to be produced for the use of unions participating in the project, and for others in Zimbabwe and throughout the Southern Africa Region. IDRC provided

$209,421 for the project, with the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions providing another $173,006.

Efforts were made to have this project build on the experiences of the Mexican project. Researchers from Mexico visited Zimbabwe in order to assist with the preparation of the research proposal, and the principal researchers from the two projects were encouraged by IDRC to collaborate in comparing their experiences. A joint paper was ultimately prepared by the principal researchers from Mexico and Zimbabwe, and by an expert from the National Institute for Occupational Health in Sweden (Loewenson, Laurell, and Hogstedt, 1993).

This project achieved partial success, but rather less than had been anticipated. Whereas the Mexican case involved one trade union in one workplace, this project was undertaken by an umbrella organization for 29 affiliated unions, with a total membership of almost one million workers. Problems of selecting appropriate persons for training, of overall organization, and of stretching the limited funds to benefit a significant number of participants were difficult to overcome. The quality of leadership for the project was weak. Furthermore, the IDRC Project Officer, who was instrumental in starting the project, left his post just as the project was getting underway, and he was not replaced for some time. There is some evidence that the union movement's tendencies towards political activism may have over-shadowed or impeded the efforts to obtain high-quality

workplace data by careful participatory methods. While the project did have some laudable outcomes (see Harris, 1992), it clearly did not live up to full expectations.

Understanding High-Risk Sexual Behaviour (90-0204)

This project, supported through the Clinical Epidemiology Unit of the Makerere Medical School, was intended to study persons at risk from HIV infection in the Rakai District of Uganda, an area with very high rates of infection. An anthropologist from McMaster University was also a consultant to the research. Previous research had revealed that the HIV infection rate was highest in trading centre areas (e.g. Lyantonde and Kyotera), along major transportation routes. The 18-month study, based in Lyantonde, aimed at understanding sexual behaviour and its determinants among persons at risk from HIV infection. Results of the study were to be used to design and implement appropriate and culturally sensitive health education and counselling programmes for the area. IDRC provided $83,445 in support of the project.

The study was to be qualitative in nature, involving 60 local persons. The "sample" was to include long-distance truckers, commercial sex workers, HIV positive individuals and persons who frequently contract sexually transmitted diseases, adolescents, and young adults. Data were to be obtained using a variety of ethnographic methods, including in-depth interviews, key informants interviews,

structured questionnaires, and focus group discussions. Commercial sex workers were to be involved in the development and implementation of the project. It was hoped that this PR approach would maximize the co-operation of participants, and would help to produce a highly sensitive and relevant set of interventions for the prevention and management of HIV infections.

The design and methodology of the project were impressive. While the project involved several traditional methods, it also appeared to incorporate a sensible blend of PR (i.e. the active participation of the commercial sex workers in project design and implementation). Unfortunately, the PR component of the project was largely unsuccessful. HIV infection in the study area was so high (about one-third of the entire population), that the potential project participants were totally demoralized; and failed to participate either because of ill health or out of a belief that the situation was already hopeless. There was too little local motivation or energy to participate in the project. A basic pre-condition for successful PR -- local motivation -- was missing. The project did generate much useful information using more traditional qualitative methods, however.

Food Systems Under Stress (92-8465)

This was the first phase of an intended long-term project which will facilitate interdisciplinary research and training on the theme of food systems under stress (FSUS). Phase one, which took place over 16 months in 1993-94, involved participants in five countries -- Botswana, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Uganda. The specific objectives of phase 1 of the project were to (1) "develop the methodological ability to explore local-level views on food insecurity and poverty, in such a way that researchers and policy makers can appreciate the full range of institutions, networks and strategies to which food insecure people have recourse. .... (2) To develop an appreciation of the accelerating pace at which local-level institutions and networks, and the entitlements and duties they stand for, are changing. ... (3) To contribute to multi-disciplinary research through capacity-building in social science departments that can complement the perspectives developed by economists and agricultural scientists" (Pottier, 1994). IDRC provided $99,810 in funding to the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, which organized the project, and which provided training to participants. The Ford Foundation provided an equal amount of funding.

Activities centred around regional workshops which were held in each country, where local representatives and villagers shared their views about the nature and causes of local problems related to food insecurity. Participants varied among the five countries (e.g. the Ministry of Health was heavily involved in Botswana, universities

tended to dominate in Zimbabwe, and a combination of government and semi-autonomous organizations was particularly active in Zambia). Among the methods used to elicit views was participatory rural appraisal. Although the method worked well, some participants felt that insufficient time was available to identify detailed experiences and knowledge; and that PRA could usefully be combined with more directed research into specific topics in the future. Important outputs from each country were lists of the most pressing problems related to food security, and plans for future research and training.

The project report (Pottier, 1994) makes it clear that workshop participants did increase their awareness of the importance of local-level information and planning in addressing the problems of food insecurity. Many of the issues important to villagers were highly localized, and called for local solutions. The workshops also demonstrated the importance of a great variety of social-science information, which can be best appreciated in a multi-disciplinary setting. This places these workshops in a clear contrast with many other conferences, which tend to concentrate on the macro-level problems of the economy or of technology.

During the concluding FSUS Workshops Review Meeting in April, 1994, "workshop reports" and "country profiles" were presented from each participating country. Methodological presentations were are made on the PRA approach and on the relationship between PRA and anthropology. A decision was made to move the

administrative centre for the project from the University of London to the Makerere Institute of Social Research, Makerere University, Kampala; and a Steering Committee of members from each of the participating countries and "one gender person" was established. It was confirmed that the Academic Programme Advisor from the University of London, as well as two Canadian academics, would continue with the project.

This would appear to be a highly successful project. It has had the advantage of participation by highly accomplished university professors and other officials of rank and ability. This helps to explain why the documentation for the project is superb. There is good evidence that this highly articulate group is achieving success in communicating with villagers, who bear the real brunt of the problems associated with food insecurity. One hopes that this activity is leading to truly helpful PR at the village level, and that the usual gap between researcher and researched can be at least partially closed to good effect.

Sustainable Hillside Agriculture (Latin America) (93-0008)

This project, still ongoing, involves some of the most extensive uses of PR of any of the projects examined for this study. Begun in 1993, the project extends over 27 months, and is centred at the Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT), a well-established research centre in Cali, Colombia, which has been operating for almost 30 years. The overall goal of the project is to improve the livelihood of poor hillside

farmers in tropical America, while maintaining the sustainability of the natural resource base. Research and development is concentrated in three sites: the Northern Cauca Valley in Colombia, Esteli in Nicaragua, and La Ceiba in Honduras. All three sites are important watersheds or micro-catchment basins, along a continuum from more intensively exploited and longer-established zones (Cauca Valley) through to newly-settled frontier areas (La Ceiba). The project uses a novel approach that combines analysis of land use and management (community mapping, Geographical Information Systems, etc.) with community-based survey methods, policy analysis, and PR for the generation of new knowledge that will lead to the adoption of new land use systems. Biological research is carried out on-farm or on communal land, with some support from experimental research stations. IDRC is providing $518,420 in support.

PR is important in this project at two distinct levels. Individual farmers are being trained to conduct on-farm research, and to participate in community activities. At a higher level on the hierarchy, a local steering committee has been formed in each of the three sites, with representatives from organizations active in the area (including NGOs, farmer associations, municipalities, and universities). These committees carry out participatory planning, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the research activities. They also set priorities, distribute funds for a limited number of local research and development sub-projects, and are accountable for the use of the funding. When the local community determines the problems which they wish to address (finding or testing new plant varieties is a common problem), the committee suggests various ways that

the community can go about solving the problems, and provides funding as seems appropriate. PR, then, is important at both the level of the individual farmer, and at the level of the steering committees. In both cases, individuals and groups are empowered to identify their problems, to conduct research, and to help in the formulation of solutions. The community as a whole develops the capacity to work together towards common goals.

The committees also provide important links to the project headquarters in Cali. In addition, it is CIAT's strategy that the committees and the communities of which they are a part will serve as examples of an approach which can ultimately be transferred to many other communities throughout Latin America. While the prototype sites are expected to develop location-specific configurations of technology and associated small enterprises, as well as forms of community organization, the focus of the project is on general, strategic principles derived from comparisons among the sites and across watersheds. In this way, the research carried out in these three sites will be relevant for other hillside zones that face similar problems of poverty, soil depletion, and deforestation.

CIAT believes that the participation of local communities, farmer groups, and NGOs in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the research and development activities is an absolutely essential component of the project. The involvement of local people will help to ensure the relevance of the project, the quality of the research, and

the continuity of activities after the project ends.

Several factors combine to help ensure the success of this project, including the reputation of the CIAT research centre, the outstanding quality of the principal investigator, the generally favourable political environment in all three countries, and some existing tradition of community action or functioning within the study areas. In this regard, important differences have become apparent between the well-established settlement in the Cauca Valley, and the much newer settlement of migrants in La Ceiba. In the former location, which has a mature sense of community aided by many family ties, information is being broadly shared; and residents are behaving in an open and co-operative manner. In the latter community, information is not shared so readily. Researchers hope that the project will help the community to work together, and will lead to higher levels of mutual trust.

Community Biodiversity Development and Conservation Programme (93-1012)

This very large project reflects the global concern about the disappearance of local varieties of agricultural crops, and the increasing reliance on a dangerously small number of "high-technology", "green revolution" varieties. The project aims to document, validate, and strengthen community innovation systems that promote the use and conservation of plant genetic resources. It is the result of a long process of discussions among the group of partners of the Community Biodiversity Development

and Conservation (CBDC) Programme, discussions supported financially by IDRC and other agencies. CBDC includes partner institutions in Zimbabwe, the Netherlands, Spain, Chile, Norway, Ethiopia, Canada, the Philippines, Brazil, Vietnam, Peru, Colombia, Thailand, Malaysia, and Sierra Leone. Its work relates directly to the Biodiversity Convention (Agenda 21), one of IDRC's specialized themes under its Corporate Programme Framework. IDRC is providing $927,000 towards this four-year project, channelled through the Centre for Plant Breeding and Reproduction Research, the Netherlands; the Rural Advancement Foundation International, Ottawa; and the Department for Environment Protection, Uganda. The Dutch Directorate-General for International Co-operation is providing $2,000,000; the Swedish International Development Authority, $2,700,000; and the Norwegian Centre for International Agricultural Development, $1,000,000 towards the project.

The project objectives are as follows: (1) to develop and implement research methodologies designed to test and validate community conservation and development approaches and technologies; (2) to promote recognition and awareness of community-based plant genetic resource activities and identify potential areas of collaboration with the formal sector on the basis of mutual benefit; (3) to encourage institution-building and human resource development related to the understanding and sustainable improvement of plant genetic resource community innovation systems; (4) to specially recognize and assess the gender dimension and relevant issues in plant genetic resource innovation and conservation; (5) to assess and propose new institutional and

legal mechanisms to recognize and implement the rights of community innovators with respect to their improvement and conservation activities; and (6) to assess and address related policy and ethical issues and implications at national, regional, and international levels. In view of the complex legal implications concerning the use of information related to agrobiodiversity, two international NGOs, the Rural Advancement Foundation International (RAFI) and Genetic Resources Action International (GRAIN), will develop a "Covenant Protocol" that defines the rules of collaboration between researchers from formal institutions and farmers. They will also design a popular biodiversity information package of resource materials on germplasm, information, funds, technologies, and systems, to be used at the community level. This package is to explain the key topics related to the conservation and development of plant genetic resources.

The use of PR in a project of this type is critical. A major criticism of the green revolution has been that a handful of high-yielding hybrids have been replacing a diverse array of local plant varieties, with large companies acquiring the legal intellectual-property rights to the new varieties and their attendant chemical inputs, while the indigenous varieties disappear. The growing lack of diversity is risky in an ecological sense, the increased use of chemicals represents environmental risks, and the exclusive ownership of the new genetic types by large companies represents economic, legal, and ethical risks to farmers. PR represents an approach whereby the farmers' indigenous plant varieties, their procedures for improving those varieties (e.g. through natural selection), and their methods of using and conserving local varieties

can become known and shared. Only through close co-operation with individual farmers could this information be elicited. This project seeks to not only obtain the information, but to involve farmers fully in the research and in the rewards of the research. This, in turn, will lead to an important form of empowerment, with, hopefully, legal protections for the use and ownership of the new information which is generated.

This project is underway in a number communities. PR methods (e.g. Participatory Rural Appraisal) have been used to help local farming communities to identify their major problems and needs. Local NGOs with agricultural expertise have begun to help farmers design and operate their own field experiments. These efforts have worked best where the NGOs are very knowledgeable about local conditions, and have, consequently, won the confidence of farmers. Communities with strong traditions of organization and co-operation have been among the most successful locations for this project. In some cases, difficulties have arisen with respect to record-keeping. Some farmers have found it difficult to provide and record the quantitative data suggested by the local experts. Similarly, some agricultural experts have been somewhat unwilling to recognize the value of data that is different from the standard quantitative types with which they are familiar.

This project has a great opportunity to have a significant impact because of the common commitment to the problem of agrobiodiversity, the high degree of co-operation among the participating organizations, and because of the significant funding

provided. On the other hand, the large number of participants in so many different countries, with a relatively high potential for conflict (e.g. between North and South), presents a major organizational challenge. In this regard, IDRC has already helped to influence the conduct of the project, by arguing strongly and effectively in favour of granting institutions in the South the right to formulate their own priorities and financial allocations. Another major challenge concerns the way in which the project can be well organized centrally, fully responsive to regional needs, and properly integrated into the work of local NGOs, local communities, and individual farmers. Effective participation, in research and in administration, is required at all of these levels in the hierarchy if the project is to be highly successful.

West African Rural Foundation (WARF) (93-8158)

WARF in not a project at all, but rather an institution for granting research funding to African rural organizations. Based in Dakar, WARF operates in Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Guinea, five Sahelian countries strongly linked through linguistic, commercial, historical, ecological, ethnic, agricultural, and migratory connections. WARF's mission statement reads: "to help solve the problems of rural society by strengthening African rural organizations and by promoting participatory methods of research and action for rural development" (Ellsworth, 1994, p. 4). The establishment of WARF, which led to the current IDRC support, was itself a considerable accomplishment, involving a three-year pilot programme. Support for the

current phase of WARF's operation includes $750,000 from IDRC, and $7,830,000 from other donors, including the Ford Foundation, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Fondation de France, and the Netherlands Government.

WARF emerged, in part, from the belief of donors that the traditional systems of granting funds to local organizations, villages, or regional NGOs were ineffective. These systems involved much of the donors' administrative time, and often ended up with funding that primarily served village elites, with little long-term or sustainable impact. African input into evaluating the project proposals was often minimal, and efforts to estimate the "genuineness" of community participation were frustrating and sometimes misguided. WARF, on the other hand, has developed a tightly-run organization which is in a good position to allocate funding to lower-level NGOs in support of rural development. It is the first professional, entirely African, grant-making foundation in West Africa (its board of directors and professional staff are composed only of citizens of the countries in which WARF works). It has taken three years to develop effective methods of management, strategies for working most effectively with local NGOs and villagers, and to recruit an outstanding staff complement of seven employees. It is now in an excellent position to support rural development through PR, and can be seen as a substitute for the cumbersome and often ineffective allocative systems traditionally used by donors.

PR and self-help have been essential themes in the development and activities

of WARF. During the three-year pilot phase, the fledgling management team developed its own modes of operation, including the preparation of a 14-page staff evaluation guide, drawn from the "total Quality Management" paradigm. Each position in the organization had position-specific behavioural variables and benchmarks for performance, determined with the participation of the person holding the position. Employees were provided with extensive training through in-house workshops, which often involved the use of outside consultants. Among the special skills taught were computing, language, strategic planning, budgeting, agricultural experimentation, preventive health care in villages, and action-research methods. A system of rigorous evaluation was put into place, operated according to principles which were thoroughly discussed and well understood. WARF developed a reputation as a demanding employer, which also improved its capability to undertake highly demanding tasks. Central to its success has been the practice of holding numerous problem-solving meetings, where problems relating to goals, processes, and the best methods of allocating grants and preparing grantee workshops, have been collectively addressed.

An innovative approach has been taken to granting funds to local NGOs. In order to identify the truly committed NGOs, and to ensure that funds will be effectively used, a two-step grant mechanism is used. Once a local organization has been selected for support, a preliminary, small planning grant is provided to "stabilize the grantee organization during a planning phase" (Ellsworth, 1994, p. 21), aimed at developing financial controls and a general strategic plan, and providing for training for

the organization's staff members in participatory community development. Even during the second phase, members of WARF work with members of the local organization at the village level. In fact, the WARF procedures require that staff members spend an average of seven days per month with villagers and grantee NGOs, and that they live and eat as do the local beneficiaries (no hotels!). The entire procedure is rejected by a number of NGOs who are accustomed to greater autonomy and much less control by the granting agency. As a result, WARF ends up supporting those organizations who are most likely to make good use of funds, and who have the best chance of assisting local villagers through participatory research and development.

IDRC and other donors believe that WARF holds great promise as a granting foundation. Through its "institutional culture of thriftiness, shared information, acknowledgement of difficulties, teamwork, delegation of responsibilities, solid working relationships with grantees, and open communication" (Ellsworth, 1994, p. 25) the foundation has laid the groundwork for effective participatory action and research. It may also become an important model for future institutions charged with distributing funds in support of effective and efficient research and development.

APPENDIX 6

DESCRIPTIONS/ANALYSES OF PROJECTS EXAMINED IN KENYA

Artisanal Fisheries -- Phase 2 (3-P-88-0332)

The development of a modern, large-scale fish-freezing/exporting industry on the shores of Lake Victoria has threatened the activities of the traditional fish traders. This project was intended to improve the earnings of the rural women fish traders through their re-introduction into the mainstream of Nile perch producing, handling, marketing, and processing, and through improved omena processing methods. The project, which has now involved a number of components including 3-P-84-0335 and 3-P-89-10166, has provided support through the Anglican Diocese of Maseno South, Kisumu, and through the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Nairobi, where the Project Director is a Professor. Total IDRC support for the project has been in excess of $300,000.

Activities have centred around a women's group, who buy fish from the fishermen, process it by drying or smoking, and re-sell the fish to consumers. The project has provided training in business practices, the development of efficient types of kilns for fish smoking, and the search for markets for the processed fish. The project has maintained close contacts with others concerned about the Lake Victoria fish stocks, including fish biologists. Documentation on the project is well-prepared and

abundant, and includes well-illustrated magazine articles and scientific papers (e.g. issues of Smaki, 1992; and Ogutu, 1988).

The field visit was to a fish-smoking site on the shores of Lake Victoria in South Nyanza Province, near Kisumu. The Project Director described the activities on the site, and demonstrated the various kilns which had been developed. One was left with the impression that the original intent of helping to restore a vital women's fishing industry had been only partially successful. While the technical development of the kilns was impressive, the market for the smoked fish was weak. In many cases, the women's major reward for coming to smoke fish was to take the fish home for family food. Despite the effective design of the kilns, only two had been built off the project site in nearby villages. One was left with the strong impression that the large-scale fishing industry had continued to marginalize the traditional women fish traders, probably despite years of effort within the project to address the problem.

The original project proposals indicated that the major beneficiaries, women fish traders, were to be active participants in the design and organization of the project. While this may have been the case, there was little evidence during the site visit to indicate that the women felt any "ownership" of the project. Their major function was to cook, and to perform songs and dances of welcome, when asked. On the other hand, our group had an extensive meeting with the women alone, which provided a good opportunity to learn about the project from their perspective. They were a cohesive

group, but one had the impression that the project was not central to their livelihood -- not any more, at least. Their lives were oriented around providing food and finances for their families, and that the Artisanal Fisheries Project might provide at least a source of smoked fish on occasion. They were primarily involved in other activities, even participating in other "development" projects in the area, as suited their daily needs. One woman owned four boats and 16 gill nets, the basis for a small-scale fishing industry. While the Artisanal Fisheries project might be of use on occasion, they did not view it as "their" project. Nor did they believe that it had solved the basic problem of their own marginalization in the face of large-scale fishing interests.

Community-Based Evaluation of Water Quality: Using WHO's Minimum Evaluation Procedure in Kibwezi (3-P-89-0283)

Prior to this specific project, IDRC had funded the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) to develop an evaluation methodology following the minimum evaluation procedure developed by the World Bank and the World Health Organization. AMREF's adaptation and implementation of the procedure was the organization's first experience with community-based, qualitative evaluation methodology. Previously, AMREF had relied only on traditional, technical and statistical analyses to measure its performance. The community-based work was highly successful, investigating indigenous methods of water management (e.g. locating the sites for shallow wells), and working with villagers to hand-dig more wells. Local participants were also engaged in experiments to test water quality. "The outcome of the self-evaluation ....

has been the development of practical and tangible work plans to improve the present activities of the project and to develop its future. By far the greatest achievement of the bacteriological testing has been the realization of the nature and implications of bacterial water-pollution and the subsequent stimulation to action of consumers. The strength of the exercise is now apparent, as well-groups are applying their new knowledge to improve well design and maintenance". (Woodhouse, 1989, p. 24; see also Woodhouse, 1990, 1991).

Through project 3-P-89-0283, IDRC provided $17,038 to convert the project director's very fine collection of slides and photographs into a professional-quality video concerning community participation in water management and sanitation. It was to be used for educational purposes in other communities, and throughout the world.

No visit to the field site was made, but the principal investigator interviewed M. Woodhouse, the project director, and read all of the available documentation. The project provides a very good example of the way in which local community members can be mobilized to participate in important health-related research, including the systematic analysis of water quality. The simple and effective participatory evaluation of sanitary conditions has raised the community's consciousness about such issues, and ought to provide an example of a method which can be used elsewhere.

Social Forestry (91-0029)

This project is actually an "institutional support grant" to the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), designed to strengthen both the institute and its management to improve the effectiveness of its social forestry initiatives. This is a large programme ($615,600 over three years is provided by IDRC, and KEFRI is contributing $518,050). The grant follows several years of support to KEFRI from IDRC in support of social-forestry projects.

In the latest phase of its work, KEFRI is making special efforts to involve local community members in assessing local resources, and in formulating plans for resource utilization. The principal investigator was taken to two sites where villagers have been actively engaged in participatory processes. At the Got Ramogi Forest site, located in Western Siaya in Nyanza Province, 150 members of the local communities participated in a Participatory Rural Appraisal on December 9 and 12, 1994 (Ongugo, 1995). The PRA generated a great deal of information (including important historical information), as well as enthusiasm for better understanding the local environment, and for using the forest resources to greater effect. During the site visit, community members demonstrated how they make clay stoves using firewood now available from the Got Ramogi Forest. They also conducted a walking tour through the forest, which involved the identification of local plants and their various practical uses (e.g. as medicines). The ultimate destination of the walk was a Luo sacred site, which holds very special

significance for the Luo people, and which may also serve as a future site for "eco-tourism". Senior officials of KEFRI participated in the site visit, and provided a wealth of information about the area. Although trained primarily as foresters, one was impressed with their knowledge of social-participatory processes, and of their commitment to their use in future planning and activities.

At a nearby, second site, the Mesera Women's Group was interviewed. The group has been experimenting with various crops in a recently-drained site with organic soils. Many food crops have been successfully cultivated, making this one of the most productive sites in this part of Siaya. The group spoke with great enthusiasm about their successes, and about the need for additional land-drainage technology.

African Research Utilization Network (ARUNET) (92-0080)

ARUNET was established in 1992 to "explore the processes and strategies which ensure that development research is addressing problems which communities (and their advocates) perceive as crucial to them, and to ensure those communities' involvement in the development research process". (ARUNET NEWS, 1993, p.1). IDRC has provided a three-year, $785,139 grant to CARE International in Kenya to establish ARUNET (CARE has provided $51,636), with the mandate to establish a network of research institutions across Africa which will help to bring research closer to beneficiaries in the community. ARUNET is to strengthen research institutions by

providing communication and common information through the publication of a newsletter, to provide small grants for community-based research, to provide training in PR, and to support participatory research evaluation.

The principal investigator met with a group of Kenyan researchers who were particularly active in PR, and who had been greatly stimulated in their work by ARUNET. They had organized and participated in a recent workshop concerning participatory rural appraisal, and had even moved to form their own NGO, named ARUNET (Kenya) (formally approved by the Government of Kenya in January, 1995). The group, which included a number of enthusiastic professional women and men from the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University, was clearly dedicated to the cause of PR and participatory community development, and was taking its own steps to provide an institutional base for activities. At the same time, the Kenyan group had become somewhat disenchanted with the Africa-wide ARUNET, and had decided to concentrate on its own, Kenyan agenda. So, while ARUNET may have had its problems, some of which appeared to be related to individual personalities, the organization had had the effect, direct or otherwise, of stimulating an energetic local group. ARUNET (Kenya) is a group of about 25 highly skilled professionals, dedicated to the development of PR in dealing with community problems. It is clearly self-empowered, and could have a significant impact in the future.

One of the important activities of ARUNET has been the publication of ARUNET

NEWS, a quarterly newsletter which first appeared in June, 1993. It has provided an important outlet for news and short articles related to activities which are encouraging and using participatory and community-based research and evaluation methods. ARUNET also published an important monograph, Participatory Evaluation: the SHEWAS Hygiene Education Case Study: Siaya District, Western Kenya (Oduol, 1994). It is essential reading for anyone interested in community-participation projects in Kenya.

Urban Poverty and Survival Strategies (92-1105)

This project supports joint research between the Department of Urban and Regional Planning (DURP) at the University of Nairobi and the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University, Canada. The main objective is to conduct a critical analysis of current social policies and approaches to poverty alleviation in Kenya, and to produce recommendations for appropriate policies and programmes. The research focusses on two cities – Nairobi and Mombasa, and involves an investigation of non-government as well as government programmes. It also examines prevailing systems of traditional, family and kinship support, how these are changing, and the impacts of such changes on the well-being of vulnerable groups. This is to be the first of a two-phase research programme. An important objective of phase 1 is to identify participatory research methods that can be used in phase 2. IDRC is providing $143,015 in support of the project, which was to have lasted for one year.

The principal investigator met with the Kenyan project director at the University of Nairobi for an extensive interview, but did not visit any of the urban field-research sites. The director, knowledgeable in PR, spoke particularly highly of the community work of a visiting York graduate student, who had lived in one of Nairobi's slums for several months in order to undertake participant observation, and to experiment with an urban version of Participatory Rural Appraisal. He and others were critical of a workshop on Participatory Action Research which had been conducted in Nairobi by two other visitors from FES. They felt that the visitors vigorously promoted a particular method of PR without taking into account local Kenyan conditions, or the considerable experience in PR already gained by many Kenyan researchers.

Elangata Wuas Ecosystem Management Programme (Phase 1) (92-8454)

This project, supported jointly by IDRC ($43,600) and the Ford Foundation ($43,600), is undertaken by the National Museums of Kenya. Elangata Wuas is located in South-Central Kenya in the Kajiado District, and comprises three Maasai group ranches of over 160,000 hectares. The area is inhabited by some 15,000 people pastoralists. The region has experienced serious land degradation from overstocking and other factors, and the people suffer from lack of potable water, poor infrastructure, malnutrition, and low educational standards. Increasing privatization through land adjudication is leading to a reduction of communal land area, and to the need for sustainable life systems and resource management within sedentary settlement areas.

This project seeks to build local institutional capacity to cope with the severe environmental conditions, and to develop sustainable forms of resource utilization.

The project attempts to involve local community members in PR and participatory development: ".. sustainable management of resources is not possible without the involvement of the whole population. This means that not only the existing (traditional and modern) management structure should be adapted (by the population itself): It also means that the programme has to place emphasis on equity and empowerment, particularly with regard to the main direct users of natural resources: women." (de Vreede, 1994).

The principal investigator visited one of the project field headquarters, and interviewed the head of the local women's group, the field-site manager, one of the young "para-taxonomists", and the project director. The project, which has now evolved beyond the description in the 92-8454 documentation, is very complex; and includes activities such as ostrich farming, the production of articles for sale from ostrich feathers, experimentation with drought-resistant crops, demonstration sites for building construction, and an important set of activities related to maintaining an ongoing inventory of plant and animal life throughout the region. The site also serves as a Centre for Biodiversity, the training of para-taxonomists (school-leavers who have learned the scientific basis for classifying biological forms, including use of modern scientific terms), and the collection of local indigenous knowledge. Research, using

local people as observers and interpreters, is also undertaken. A recent discovery concerned the manner in which vultures decide what dead animals are edible, and which are contaminated with chemicals. The National Museums of Kenya believe that the Elangata Wuas area has considerable potential for eco-tourism.

The project is conceptually very attractive, but exceedingly complicated in its detail. It is difficult, therefore, to determine the full extent or effectiveness of PR. The project director is highly sympathetic to involving local people as much as possible in the research and development, but he is also aware of the enormous gap between the traditional life of the Maasai and of the demands of modern scientific research. The challenge of developing a sustainable resource-management system within privately-owned pieces of land, too small to sustain human settlement under the traditional system of communal land-holding, is a severe test of the ability of Museum researchers to work effectively with the local people.

Community-Based Health Information and Planning (93-8480)

This project is based in the Kibwezi Division, an area between Nairobi and Mombasa with unreliable rainfall, poor infrastructural facilities in transportation and communication, widespread poverty, and poor public health care. The local communities have always been dependent on relief food provided by the Government and NGOs operating in the area. Against this backdrop, the African Medical and

Research Foundation (AMREF) is developing a community-based information system for health care and planning, a project involving people at both ends of the technological spectrum. Local villagers are participating in assessing health-related conditions, and are contributing to the construction of 12 local centres for providing public health information. At the same time, a team of researchers is designing a modern database, using a Geographic Information System on a powerful, state-of-the-art computer. IDRC is providing $226,113 to AMREF in support of the project, with AMREF providing an additional $39,634 itself.

The principal investigator spent most of a day visiting two village sites within the project area. Local villagers are participating in the project in a number of useful ways. They are administering and providing answers for sample questionnaires. Members of three communities have participated in Participatory Rural Appraisals, designed to elicit information about villagers' health-related knowledge, concerns, and needs (NETAD, 1994). Some of this information has been used to help design the database for the GIS system, thus bridging the gap between the villager and a highly sophisticated scientific device which can help with the planning and delivery of health care. Community members are participating in the construction of the local health-education centres, either by donating small amounts of money, or by providing labour. The Project Director lives in the local community, and appears to make every effort to be accessible and helpful to local people. He is well-informed and experienced in participatory processes (see, e.g., Oranga and Nordberg, 1994 (he is the primary author)), and is

eloquent is explaining how a medical biostatistician requires the assistance and participation of the local community in planning for better health care. All in all, this project demonstrates a variety of PR approaches in helping to solve very serious health problems at a regional level. This is in contrast to the traditional Kenyan system of health care, which is highly centralized and "top-down".